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FRONTISPICE

MY EXPERIENCES IN AUSTRALIA.

BEING
RECOLLECTIONS •
OF A
VISIT TO THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES IN 1856-7.

BY A LADY.

"Let aged Britain claim the classic past,
A shining track of bright and mighty deeds;
For thee I prophesy the future vast,
Whereof the present sows its giant seeds."

BALLADS FOR THE TIMES.



J. F. HOPE, 16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1860.

J. F. HOPE, 16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET

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P R E F A C E

So much has been written of late years about the Australian colonies, that it may seem at first sight that there is nothing new left to write about.

But all the works which I have seen, though of far higher pretensions than the little volume I venture to submit to the public, still appear to me to leave something untold.

While they contain a large amount of information relative to Australia interesting and valuable to the statesman, the man of science, the merchant, and the emigrant, still, perhaps, they give but little notion of every-day life in the colonies, as it would appear from a lady's point of view.

I am aware that these recollections of a fifteen months' residence in Australia do but little towards

supplying the want referred to ; still, if the perusal of these pages has the effect of checking the over-sanguine expectations of some of my lady readers, and of removing the over-timid apprehensions of others, I shall feel that this record of my own experience has not been without its use.

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MY EXPERIENCES IN AUSTRALIA.

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“ And fearfully and mournfully
We bid the land farewell,
Though passing from its mists away
In a brighter world to dwell.”

Hemans.

On a cold, bleak day in March, 1856, my husband and myself stood leaning against the bulwarks of the good ship — —, gazing earnestly at a little boat fast disappearing from our view. Even before she reached the not very distant shore, she

became enveloped in the dull gray mist that hung around, and we lost sight of the dear friends who had left us by her, and of whom we had just taken a long farewell.

For we belonged to the number of the outward-bound ; the vessel on whose deck we stood would, God willing, next cast anchor in the fair harbour of Sydney, and for a time we were to be wanderers in that bright new land, of which it has been said that—

“ A soft clime and a soil ever teeming,
Summer’s December and Winter’s July ;
The bright southern cross in the firmament gleam-
ing,
There the safe harbours are bidding men try.”

Before us were the perils of the wilderness, as well as the perils of the sea ; and on the eve of such a journey it certainly required a brave heart to banish all doubts and fears, and look brightly and hopefully into the future.

The day, too, was dark and stormy. The dull threatening sky, and the wailing sough of the wind, whistling among the furled

sails, added not a little to our melancholy, being, moreover, suggestive of a state of weather likely to prove very disagreeable to so bad a sailor as myself. However, as we were not to raise our anchor till the following morning, we had an evening of comparative quiet before us, and we thought it would be wise to make use of it in putting our cabins in order, that when the evil hour should come, we might be as comfortable as circumstances would permit. So, adopting the "up and doing" philosophy, I set to work, endeavouring to do my utmost to give them a home-like appearance. To my inexperienced eyes the accommodation seemed very poor, but I found afterwards, by comparison, that I had no reason to complain, and that it was better than any to be obtained at present in the mail steamers. We had one of the stern cabins for ourselves, and the side one next to it for our little girl and her nurse. The clear space in both was very small, but in ours there were famous lockers, and convenient places to stow away our boxes, &c., which conveniences, indeed, I found, after a

little experience, constituted their principal recommendation. On the whole, any advantages they possess do not, I think, compensate for the great disadvantage of the motion being so much more sensibly felt at the extreme ends, than nearer the centre of the ship, so that all bad sailors should carefully avoid choosing a stern cabin.

I made this discovery when too late to remedy our mistake, and when experience had taught me how impossible it is to struggle against sea sickness—an impossibility which I would not believe in—on the afternoon of our departure. I knew too well that I was by no means a good sailor, but I tried to persuade myself that a week or ten days would be the limit of my period of wretchedness; at all events it was better to be sanguine on the subject, and to look as much as possible on the bright side of things.

By the time we had put our cabins in some sort of order, we were summoned to dinner, and had the opportunity of making the acquaintance of our fellow-passengers, about whom I felt naturally a little curious.

We were but a small party, in all thirteen grown-up passengers and four children.

It would be but an invidious task to particularize any in so small a number; and I fancy that any sketch of character taken at sea would bear a very caricature sort of resemblance to the original.

Certainly, petty miseries, and daily annoyances and privations, are not favourable to the display of the more pleasing features of character; and too frequently on board a ship one general rule of action is very undisguisedly followed—that of “every one for himself.”

Some allowances also must be made for people of totally different dispositions and habits, of different stations in life, and engaged in different pursuits, when gathered together in so small a space—deprived of all their usual occupations and subjects of interest, and compelled for a certain number of months to associate more or less intimately with each other. Among a large number of passengers this remark is of course less applicable, as then it is quite possible to select your own associates, and to fight as shy as

you like of the rest of your fellow-passengers, whose peculiarities may serve rather to amuse you, when you are not brought too closely in contact with them.

For instance, the small affectations and fine-lady airs of the wives of the minor colonial officials, going out for the first time to share in their husband's colonial dignities, are only amusing, when viewed from a little distance; but you are apt to judge somewhat severely of the owner of such accomplishments, when circumstances bring you into constant communication with her, and you happen to be yourself to some extent a sufferer from the constant attention she requires, and from her monopolization of many small comforts, to the exclusion of all less exacting passengers.

Then, no doubt, the petty miseries I have referred to affect one's own mental vision, and make one take a jaundiced view of everything. For instance, can there be a more agreeable addition to a pic-nic party ashore than a lady who plays upon the guitar, adding to the melody thus produced the music of her voice? Or could any one

desire more harmless and healthy exercise for some half-dozen young men, than a good game at leap-frog? But if at the time chosen for the music you are at sea in a ship pitching heavily, and you yourself suffering from a severe headache; or if the place selected for the game be immediately above the berth in which you are endeavouring to forget all your woes in the arms of "sleep, the sweet consoler"—why, I am afraid you are apt to be a little uncharitable, and wish the fair musician a slight taste of the terrible *mal de mer*, and the uproarious youngsters safely back in the playgrounds of their late respective schoolmasters.

So, board of ship is not a place to do justice to any characters, or to make them appear in a favourable light; and I think the best plan to adopt, at all events for the first few weeks of a voyage, is to think as charitably of, and associate as sparingly with your fellow-passengers as you find it possible to do.

This resolution, or at all events the latter part of it, I found it easy enough to adhere to. On our first evening on board after a

late dinner, during which we just learned to know our fellow-passengers by sight, I retired early to my cabin, and when I awoke the next morning we were sailing down the Thames, and before the middle of the day were in such rough water that we ladies were obliged to take to our sofas, and were unable to reappear in public for several days. Oh! the horrors of that time, and indeed of many succeeding days and weeks. I do not think it is possible to portray, however faintly, the utter wretchedness of sea sickness. I struggled, I think I may say bravely, but, alas! it was vainly, with the malady. Urged by my husband's exhortations I contrived to get upon deck for the first time on the third day.

My servant had also proved a very bad sailor, and my little girl had just been sufficiently unwell to be content to lie quietly in bed—a fact which I was unnatural enough not to lament over.

We had no stewardess on board, and my husband had had to act in many and various capacities, including those of nurse and lady's maid; it was therefore a matter of no

small rejoicing to him to get us all safely on deck, and as he hoped on a fair way towards recovery.

The day was bright and cheering, and the fresh air very pleasant. We were getting near the mouth of the Channel, but the English coast was still in sight, forming a blue line in the horizon. Several homeward bound ships passed us, their white sails glistening so brightly in the sunshine, and the sea was so calm and the sky so blue I almost made up my mind that all my troubles were over, and began to indulge in some pleasurable anticipations with respect to the remainder of the voyage; they were doomed to receive another check, however for that evening the wind sprang up again and continued blowing violently for some days. In the Bay of Biscay, that place of ill renown, it amounted almost to a hurricane, and continued blowing very violently till Friday, the 28th of March, when we passed Madeira; I could not distinguish land, though I believe it was to be seen through the telescope. The weather began to get very pleasant from this time; we fell in with the

trade winds, and went bounding merrily along. I was much better, indeed quite well when on deck, but unable to bear the close atmosphere of the saloon. The captain's wife, a very pleasant person, was an equal sufferer with myself, and we used to condole with one another on our lamentable shortcomings as good sailors. I am afraid not even the sight of the flying fish and the pretty paper nautilus with its gauze-like sails, or the splendid sunsets and calm moonlight evenings, compensated for all I underwent. The heat, too, soon became very great, but still by no means so intense as I had been led to expect. With the exception of two or three days just on the line, when we were becalmed, and there was positively not a breath of wind stirring, we always had a nice breeze which prevented the weather from being absolutely oppressive. The day before we crossed the line we had the good fortune to pass a homeward bound vessel, which afforded us the opportunity of sending letters to our friends. The excitement such an event causes far out at sea can hardly be imagined by those who have not had the

good or ill fortune to experience it. We had public news of great importance to communicate to them, being none other than the intelligence of the termination of the war with Russia and the birth of an heir to the French throne, while their good offices were to consist in carrying tidings of us to many anxious hearts at home. In the evening before we parted we exchanged rockets and blue lights, and the crews cheered one another very heartily. After crossing the line we fell in with the south-east trades, and made a very good run to the Cape—only forty odd days from England. After passing it the weather became very bad, very cold and stormy, and for many days the hatches were battened down, and we ladies were unable to get on deck. On one occasion, when it was blowing very hard, my husband persuaded me to disobey orders and go out; I paid for my rashness by getting drenched from head to foot by a sea which, had it broken nearer where we were standing, the captain declared, would have washed us overboard. So I made a hasty retreat, but considered that I had been

more than compensated for my bath by the magnificent spectacle presented by the sea in a storm. The spray was drifting like snow, and the large curling green waves looked as if they must overwhelm the good ship as they kept breaking over her sides, flooding her decks, and occasionally rushing down the companion ladder, and making their way into the cabins situated in that part of the ship: our position at the extreme end, saved us from any such unpleasant intruders. This gale was the beginning of our bad weather, and the wind continued blowing heavily, and generally against us, until we were off the coast of Van Diemen's Land. With me this was a time of intense misery, I was confined almost entirely to my berth; if the day chanced to be a little calmer and milder than usual, I perhaps got on deck by twelve o'clock for an hour or two. The captain was very kind in erecting a tarpaulin to shelter us, in some measure, from the wind, rain, and snow; and in lashing my chair firmly on the deck; and when I had sufficiently recovered from the exertion of

crawling upstairs, I used to find some amusement in watching the flights of birds which came round our ship ; the large snowy white albatross, the mutton-bird with its silver gray plumage, and the beautiful little Cape pigeon. It was a favourite amusement with some of the young men on board, to bait a line with salt pork, and fish for them. Sometimes they seized it eagerly, and were hauled on the deck for our nearer inspection, though they showed to much less advantage there than in their native element. If they were not much injured, we ladies generally obtained their release, and they were allowed to fly away, though in one or two instances, in the case of some very beautiful specimens, we were cruel enough to sanction their death, and petition for their skins. We once captured a small shark, and on several occasions saw some tremendous monsters swimming close to the ship. They are always accompanied by a beautifully-striped little fish, called the pilot-fish, of which sailors tell funny stories. They say, in times of danger the shark swallows them, and puts

them up again when the peril is past; and that in return for such kindly offices, these little fish serve as guides to their huge protectors, and look out for prey for them. As we got into the more southern latitudes, we occasionally saw whales at some little distance, spouting and blowing ; and phosphorescent substances in great abundance. In the evening, the sea used literally to seem on fire. We once got the captain to lower a bucket and bring up one of the glittering balls ; by daylight its colour was of a dirty white, and it had something of the consistency of a sponge. I think that the general opinion is, that these balls are composed of a sort of animalcula, in which the whales find their chief sustenance. We kept our specimen in salt water, and were in hopes as night approached, to see it again assume its brilliant appearance, but we were disappointed, as it never shone brightly again, and after watching it for two or three evenings we threw it overboard. We had been some eighty-three days at sea, when the captain told us one morning that that afternoon at about four o'clock, we should

sight Cape Pillar in Van Diemen's Land. The pleasurable excitement this intelligence caused may easily be imagined, and every eye was eagerly bent in the direction in which land was expected to appear. At last there was a cry of "land ahead," and within half an hour of the time named, we saw the fair land of Tasmania rising as a cloud out of the sea ; the wind at this time unfortunately failed, and instead of reaching Sydney in some three or four days from this, it was that day week before we sighted the lighthouse at the entrance to Sydney Harbour. Any land must appear beautiful to eyes that for three long months have beheld nothing but one vast expanse of sea and sky ; and the south-east coast of Australia from Cape Howe to Sydney Heads, is certainly in itself picturesque, wooded almost to the water's edge. We ran in quite close to the shore, and obtained a view of Wollongong, and the "Five Islands" opposite to it ; and by twelve o'clock on Sunday, the 16th of June, we were opposite the entrance to Sydney Harbour. The wind at this time very provokingly died away, and the

whole afternoon was passed in tacking and retacking, and when night came on, we were still outside the Heads, and though the night was calm, the wind somewhat more favourable, and the moon shining brightly, the captain most wisely determined not to attempt entering till daylight, as this was his first voyage to Sydney, and he was not well acquainted with all the intricacies of the harbour. So we beat out to sea till the following morning, when we stood in for the Heads, and by ten o'clock A.M., we were safely anchored opposite the Quarantine Ground—our long and stormy voyage brought to a happy conclusion.

A pilot soon boarded us to conduct us up the harbour, and he was accompanied by a medical officer, who made the usual inquiries touching our bill of health. It was fortunately, a very satisfactory one, and there was nothing to prevent our proceeding on to Sydney as soon as the sails could be furled, and a steamer procured to take us in tow. Long before this, however, many boats from the town had come up to us, bringing friends of the passengers, news-

paper reporters, &c. Ours was the latest news from the Old Country, and most eagerly it was received. My first remark on seeing the younger, and for the most part native-born among the new comers, was, "What a set of Yankees!" their appearance so completely realised one's notions of a genuine New Yorker. Tall and slight, with that go-ahead sort of expression of countenance, the cigar in the mouth, and the broad-brimmed straw hat—all seemed to correspond with the generally received opinion of the characteristics of "the finest nation in creation."

But, as I was not likely to recognise any familiar face among all who came on board, arriving as I did, a "stranger in a strange land," and as colonial news possessed but little interest for me, my attention was principally engrossed by the surrounding scenery, which was very lovely.

There can be but one opinion on this point; every stranger must be struck by its beauty.

The entrance is bold and rocky, the North Head rising perpendicularly from the sea,

to the height of many hundred feet; farther in, the style of scenery changes, though it cannot be said to lose any of its beauty.

Wooded hills slope down to the water's edge; rocks festooned with creeping plants, and picturesque little headlands, jut out into the deep blue water, the white sparkling sand on the beach forming a pretty contrast with the bright azure of the waves rippling gently over it; while here and there are scattered pretty villas, half-hidden by the dark wood that surrounds them. English eyes may miss the bright green foliage of the trees of their own land; but to mine, which had been so long accustomed to the darker hues of our Scotch fir woods, the sombre tints of these trees, which are mostly of the *Eucalyptus* tribe, wore a home-like aspect, affording too, a very pleasing contrast with the deep bright blue of the sky above and the water beneath. There is a wonderful clearness in the Australian atmosphere, the outline of every object is so distinctly defined; hills, trees, and buildings stand out so sharply; and then the sky

of cobalt, or ultramarine, forms so lovely a background.

I had plenty of time on the morning of our arrival to admire all the surrounding beauties, for we were at anchor for two or three hours off the Quarantine Ground, and were afterwards towed very slowly up the harbour, past the Island of Pinchgut (which, from its position commanding the only navigable channel, has lately been fortified), and many other small islets, and cast anchor opposite the Circular Quay, where the Custom House is situated, and where most merchant vessels unload.

And now we had really arrived at the end of our long voyage. How inexpressibly thankful we all were! and I not the least among the number, for I had been so very ill during the whole of the passage.

Certainly, Sydney stood a fair chance of having in me a very partial observer, for I was quite prepared to be delighted with everything on *terra firma*. I will, however, reserve the account of the impressions it made on me for another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

First impressions of Sydney—Half-disappointed—The streets—Irregular style of building—Scarcity of private houses—Hyde Park—Its surroundings—A colonial notability—Another—The value of a character—A *model* of colonial architecture—St. James's Church—Its neighbours—Legislative Council Chambers—An odious comparison—Newspapers—Literary taste in the colony—More about the streets—Government gardens—Flower shows—Gardening “doesn’t pay”—Government House—A stranger’s yearning for home.

“That which they have done, but earnest of the things that they shall do.”

Tennyson.

THOUGH I have stated in the previous chapter, that Sydney stood every chance of finding in me a somewhat partial delineator, so truly delighted was I once more to set foot on dry land, yet I cannot say that the first impressions with which it inspired me were very favourable. I suppose I had expected too much, for I fancy I ought to

have been much struck with it; this is a piece of common courtesy expected from every stranger. The general remark used to be, "Were you not delighted with the town—it must be so far in advance of what you could have expected? Are not the shops in George Street very handsome?" Now, the simple truth is, I was *disappointed* in Sydney as *a city*; nothing can be more beautiful than its situation, and its extent equalled my anticipations, but the streets are straggling and irregular; here and there some fine shops and public buildings, and adjoining them, miserable tumble-down cottages, surrounded with old broken palings, all evidently erected in the "year one" of the colony. The city does not seem to have been built originally according to any plan, but the ground was sold or given in patches to private individuals, who erected all sorts of edifices, with all sorts of aspects and accesses, such as seemed good in their own eyes, and accorded best with their own private resources. The result, naturally enough, is not very striking or imposing, although I am told much has been done

during the past few years, in opening *culs de sac*, and thus adding to the length of the streets, if not to their width or regularity. Still, if you take into consideration the fact that these streets are badly paved—when paved at all—shockingly drained, and very indifferently lighted: these circumstances must, I think, induce one to admit that the good folks of Sydney, with their large municipal revenue, have yet some reason to be ashamed of the architectural defects and sanitary arrangements of their city. Another thing that struck me very much in Sydney, was the absence of those rows of private houses which give such an air of respectability, even to our second-rate provincial towns at home. The best looking houses of this description in the town, are in Wynyard Square, and are inhabited almost exclusively by rich merchants, principally Jews. Then there are some few comfortable houses in Elizabeth Street, opposite a large green which the old inhabitants point to with no little pride and delight, and call Hyde Park. I call it by courtesy a green, as, during the three or four winter months that I beheld

it, it might lay some claim to be thus designated, but for the remainder of the year, the grass can boast of no such refreshing hue; indeed, I have been told almost all traces of verdure disappear, partly from the attacks of the sheep, cattle, and innumerable little droves of goats, always to be found trespassing within its bounds, and partly from the scorching effects of the summer sun, and the whirlwinds of dust with which this favoured region is visited. In speaking of Hyde Park I must not omit to mention Lyons Terrace, the miniature "Park Lane" of Sydney, containing some six or eight houses, by no means remarkable for their architectural beauty; but containing good public apartments, and forming roomy and comfortable residences; but these buildings having been, I believe, the first of their class erected in the city, "*The Terrace*," *par excellence*, is regarded with great pride and admiration alike by the patriarchs and the rising generation. It was built by an old convict of the name of Lyons—hence its designation; not, as some one suggested, from its being the chosen residence of sundry of

the colonial notables. Some short account of its founder may not be wholly uninteresting, as serving to give an idea of the extraordinary career of some of the old convicts in former days. This worthy was transported in the early times of the colony, and, from conducting himself properly while passing through the usual gradations of a convict's lot, he obtained in due time his ticket of leave, and set up as an auctioneer. Being by this time thoroughly convinced that honesty was the best policy, both in a moral and money-making point of view, he wisely practised it, continued to gain the confidence of the Sydney public, and died in the possession of great wealth. A contemporary of his, as I have been told, another old convict, of the name of Samuel Terry, contrived to amass a still larger fortune (some £20,000 per annum) from very small beginnings; his first possessions having been limited to his gains at the precarious game of "pitch and toss." The money thus earned he laid out in buying spirits, which he sold to old soldiers for their grants of land. In time these grants became very

valuable, and constituted a considerable portion of the very large fortune referred to. There is a story told of this person which seems almost too good to be genuine, but nevertheless I was assured it was a fact. He was attended on the occasion of some severe illness, by an old military or naval doctor, of well-known probity, to whom he is reported to have said, "Ah, doctor! I would give ten thousand pounds for your character." "Yes," was the somewhat cynical reply; "but only that you might make twenty of it."

But I have been digressing somewhat from the subject under discussion. To return to Sydney itself, and its public buildings. On the other side of the "Park" is the Roman Catholic cathedral, a very handsome edifice, which reflects no little credit on the liberality of the Roman Catholic portion of the Sydney community; near it is the old Sydney College, a plain unadorned building, a temporary substitute for the very handsome University now in the course of erection on the outskirts of the town. Within a short distance of the college is the Museum, a somewhat unsightly

edifice, which, I was told, a gentleman now well known in the political world at home, had called "an exaggerated mouse-trap," from its bearing, in outward appearance, no small resemblance to the useful little contrivance in question. Last, but not least, in describing the buildings situated round this "Park," or *Race course* (for I should not omit to state it is known also by this name, though now, at all events, never used for the purpose it would suggest), I must not neglect to give due honour to St. James's Church, a large edifice of red brick, with a tall slated spire—about as ugly a building, both within and without, as can well be imagined; but one of which the imaginary architectural beauties are, nevertheless, regarded by the old colonists with much the same sort of admiration, as may be felt by modern Romans for the mighty dome of St. Peter's. To the younger members of the community, it is a sort of St. George's, Hanover Square, a place where all fashionable marriages are solemnized, and which is graced, moreover, every Sunday by the presence of the beauty and fashion

of the metropolis. Flanking this building on either side are the old Criminal Court-house, and the original Convicts' Barracks—the character of the former inhabitants of these buildings seeming to offer an apt illustration of an old proverb. A somewhat more fitting neighbour for a sacred edifice, is the hospital situated just at the entrance of Macquarrie Street. Adjoining the hospital, are the Legislative Council Chambers—but temporary buildings it is to be hoped, as they are hardly in a style to do much credit to the city, being in fact mere iron erections, by no means so imposing in their external appearance as the edifices ought to be in which is transacted the business of so large and thriving a colony as New South Wales. The interior, however, is neat and comfortable, though somewhat small, and the halls, especially that of the Legislative Council, are fitted up in good enough taste, although very insignificant when compared with those of the younger colony of Victoria, of which I shall speak in their place in this narrative. On the opposite side of the same street is the subscription library—a hand-

some building, but not, as I have understood, quite so well supplied with books as it ought to be. In fact it must, I think, be confessed that, with some few individual exceptions, the public of Sydney is not a reading public. It is far too practical to waste much time on general literature. Those whose time is not wholly taken up by money-making pursuits, give all their leisure to politics, and the few whose private resources admit of such indulgence, not unfrequently devote every thought and faculty to this most engrossing of all pursuits. There are two daily papers, and several weekly ones, edited with more or less talent and ability, and these organs of public opinion are eagerly perused by all classes of society ; but books treating on abstract matters—indeed, all literary publications not touching on the actual present interests of the colony—are little sought after or cared for. Bookworms or authors would meet with little sympathy there. I should much doubt whether even a genuine poet would be made a lion of, even by the ladies, unless he was particularly good looking or had a handle to his name : or by

the gentlemen, unless he was able and willing to write political squibs. This want of literary tastes among the ladies I attribute partly to the enervating effects of the climate, which disinclines the residents for all mental as well as bodily exertion, and partly to the American custom of introducing girls into society at such a very early age, that there has been really but little time for mental culture, or for the acquisition of the information without which these tastes are not likely to exist. Of course I must be understood as speaking generally, and among the acquaintances I formed, I could name some few exceptions to my theory, but from what I heard and saw, I think it holds good as applied to the class.

To return, however, to my description of the town: the streets I have named are, I think, those in which most of the private dwelling houses are situated, though there are a few of an inferior description in some of the other thoroughfares, more in the business part of the town. The most important of these thoroughfares is un-

doubtedly George Street—the Regent Street of Sydney—in which most of the best shops are to be found. It extends from the Circular Quay almost to the site of the New University—a distance, I suppose, of some two or three miles—and though known by different names at its two extremities, is in reality one and the same street, running with many and various bends from north to south, as do all the more important thoroughfares. Intersecting these at all sorts of angles are other streets, generally of less importance, but some of them boasting of many good shops, as is the case with King Street and Hunter Street. The last, indeed (Hunter Street), contained two which had more interest for me than any others in the town. They belonged to birdstuffers, and their windows were always full of many curious and beautiful specimens of the feathered natives of Australia, both alive and dead: parrots and parroquets of many and various hues, the well-known white cockatoo, with its yellow-coloured crest, and the far rarer and larger black one, with bright scarlet top-knot and tail-feathers, a most magnificent bird,

specimens of which are most difficult to be obtained, from its wild shy habits. These and many other denizens of the bush, down to the well-known boodjerigah, or shell-parrot, or love bird, as it is more commonly called, with its beautiful plumage of soft vivid green, and the still smaller and scarcely less beautiful diamond bird, with its speckled wings and golden breast, made these shops points of great attraction to me, and I plead guilty to many idle moments passed in gazing in at their windows, and admiring and even coveting their contents. But in a general way the streets of Sydney do not strike a stranger as possessing any great attraction as promenades; the pavements are narrow and generally out of repair, and excepting immediately after a heavy fall of rain when the crossings are hardly fordable, the streets are swept by whirlwinds of dust, which are most particularly disagreeable to all foot passengers, and to ladies' dresses ruinous in the extreme. 14468.

In general, however, the ladies of Sydney are no great pedestrians, though, when they do venture on a walk, it is somewhat asto-

nishing to see their evident preference for the hot, dusty, crowded streets, to the pleasantly shaded walks of the Government Domain. This same Government Domain is in my estimation the great ornament and attraction, I had almost said the redeeming feature, of Sydney. It was laid out during General Macquarrie's government, and does great credit to the good taste of those who reserved it for the lungs of the future city. It is situated on one of the small bays of the harbour, and commands many beautiful views of different points and headlands. In addition to this, it is well wooded and contains three or four miles of walks and drives, comprising also within its limits the Upper and Lower Botanical Gardens. The former are laid out somewhat stiffly in squares and geometrical figures, and contain a small range of forcing houses, as extensive no doubt as is necessary in this delightful climate, but still on a very limited scale; so that any one familiar with the immense extent to which glass is employed in the old country, cannot help smiling at the evident pride with which the old colonists point to these small edifices—

a trifle larger than ordinary melon frames—which seem to excite more of their admiration and attention than do the natural beauties of the gardens, which are really very considerable. Trees and plants from all parts of the world flourish here in great profusion : the Bamboo, the India-rubber tree, the Loquhat, the Norfolk Island pines, and Palms of every variety. Fuchsias, Heliotropes, Geraniums, and Camellias, the objects of so much care in our ungenial climate, grow here to a large size, and form most beautiful objects in this garden landscape; but to my eyes the most lovely of all these flowering plants are the creepers, which grow in great profusion, and are trained over walls and trellis-work.

Indeed, these and many beautiful exotics (of the old country) growing so luxuriantly in the open air, serve more than anything else to remind the stranger how far away he is from dear old England; for in many respects Sydney is so like some of our provincial towns—there is so little to strike any one as new or foreign in its appearance—that it is difficult for the stranger to realise that so many thousands of miles lie between this

country of his adoption and his own dear native land.

Of the two Botanical Gardens which I have been describing, the most attractive is undoubtedly the Lower Garden, as it is called, which borders one of the many pretty little bays of the harbour; the walks in it are laid out with very great taste, and form delightful promenades. In the early mornings it is a favourite haunt of nursery-maids and children, and once a week becomes a favourite resort of the colonial world of fashion, one of the regimental bands playing there every Tuesday afternoon. On Sundays, too, it is thrown open after morning service, and is thronged by the mechanical and working classes, but at other times this beautiful spot is comparatively deserted.

Three or four times in the course of the year flower shows are held here. I was present at one of them (in October), but in my opinion these exhibitions add very little to the every-day attractions of the gardens. The exhibitors were very few in number, and one tent sufficed for all the specimens collected. There were some fine samples of

fruit and a few rare and beautiful plants, but, generally speaking, the Sydney public have something else to do than to spend much time or money in the cultivation of their gardens, labour is so very expensive, and that sort of thing "does not pay."

In my description of the Government Domain, I must not omit making mention of the Government House. It is rather a fine building, in what I think is called the "Tudor" style of architecture; the reception rooms are good, and the windows command a most beautiful view over parts of the harbour and north shore. It is the only building in Sydney or its environs which can give the young Australians any idea of "the stately homes of England." There are many other pretty residences belonging to private individuals, erected in the outskirts of the town, but they are all in the cottage or villa style. The enormous price of labour makes building so very expensive, that the erection of a mansion at all approaching in extent the large rambling manor houses so often to be met with in the old country, would really swallow up a fortune; so that

it is not very surprising that the good folks of Sydney should be contented with comparatively small residences ; though I must own I was somewhat astonished at the style of architecture most frequently adopted, it seems so little suited to the climate of the country. Few precautions are taken against the heat, which in summer is most excessive. In the town but few of the houses are built with verandahs, or provided with *jalousies* of any description. Even Government House is not much better off in this respect, and though a handsome building, seems hardly adapted for a country in which during six months out of the twelve the thermometer varies from 70° to 90°. I think I have now described the most remarkable features of the actual city of Sydney, and in my next chapter will give some short account of the numerous suburbs which have lately sprung up about it. I do not fancy that I have depicted it in very glowing colours, but it is not a place, I think, which a stranger is likely to be much taken with. Few new arrivals are much pleased with it. After a time, no doubt, all would

be viewed differently; interests and occupations spring up, and it is as desirable as it is natural that the land of one's adoption, where one's home is formed for life should be viewed with partial eyes; but to the mere visitor, I know of few more uninteresting places. There is not the charm of novelty, which renders a short residence in a foreign town agreeable, and yet the very thing that makes home dear—all old associations are also wanting, and at first and for many a long day, constant and deep must be the yearnings of emigrants, of almost all classes and characters, for "country, mother country," and many an earnest prayer must be breathed for permission

"To gaze upon her shores again."

CHAPTER III.

The suburbs of Sydney—View of the harbour from Paddington—
No place like home—The drives round Sydney—*Digging out*
an omnibus—A bouquet of wild flowers—Flowering shrubs—
Forest trees—The bush—Varieties of a *scrub*—Snakes—
Botany Road—Botany Bay—The menagerie—Cook's River—
New Town.

“ Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright beaming summers exalt the perfume ;
Far dearer to me yon low glen o' green breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom.”

Burns.

SYDNEY has very much increased within the last few years, and its suburbs now are numerous and extensive. On the opposite shore of the inlet known as Darling Harbour, quite a new town has sprung up, and a bridge, which has lately been thrown across, will give, no doubt, an additional impetus to building in that direction. Land has become very valuable there, and where a few years ago a few scattered cottages

alone were to be seen, now stand the flourishing suburbs of Balmain, Pyrmont, and St. Leonard's.

In quite an opposite direction, to the south of Sydney, extend Darlinghurst, Woolumooloo and Paddington, which from the beauty of their situation, and from their hitherto having afforded easier access to the town, have been generally preferred as places of residence. There are many pretty villas and cottages scattered about here, and still farther out on the road to the South Head are some very pretty places, all, as I have before said, built in the villa style, but whose beauty of situation forms their principal attraction. Nothing more exquisite can be conceived than the views that some of these command. As I sit writing this on a dull February morning in Scotland, the snow beating against the window panes, and myself ensconced in a large arm-chair with my table drawn close to the fire, a picture of one of these views comes vividly before my mind's eye : I am once more seated in a handsome stone verandah, one of the very few to be met with near

Sydney; a flight of steps leads down to a small, neatly kept garden, with some really green turf to refresh the eye, and remind one of home; a field beyond, and the slanting roof of a cottage seen through some low growing trees; one or two Norfolk pines, rearing their tall heads far above the others; these form the foreground of my landscape: and beyond are the bright blue waves breaking on the yellow sand, and picturesque headlands, crowned at first with a dark glossy green and becoming more and more indistinct, till at last it is difficult to believe those faint hazy lines are really the outline of the bold North Head, or that that thread of white is the lighthouse on the south shore. Then, looking in the distance like birds of snowy plumage—

“The stately ships come on,
To their harbour under the hill.”

And over all is the clear blue sky, and enlivening all, the bright golden sunshine. Or I view the same scene by the soft light of the moon; far in the distance are heard faint sounds of music, and steaming up the

harbour is one of the fine mail steamers hung with lamps from stem to stern. The crew, delighted at the termination of their long voyage, fire off rockets and blue lights, which are answered from the shore, and illuminate quite brightly the surrounding scene. A prettier sight could hardly be imagined, but I must own that the principal pleasure I derived at the time from contemplating it, was in the thought it suggested, that in the good ship's next voyage we should probably be among the homeward bound passengers. So, remembering how I pined for my northern home when far away, I feel little difficulty in reconciling myself to our ungenial climate, with its hail and sleet, and frost and ice, and would not exchange our snow-clad hills for a landscape of perpetual summer beauty. Still, there is no doubt it is one of the pleasures of travelling, that these lovely pictures do not pass away from the recollection, and that as much delight is often experienced in dwelling on the remembrance of these scenes as is felt at the time when actually witnessing them.

The drives about Sydney, as may well be imagined from what I have just said, are very picturesque, especially the two in the direction of the South Head, known respectively as the Old and New South Head Roads, and they have the additional advantage of being kept in tolerably good repair, which is more than can be said for most of the roads round Sydney, or, in fact, of the streets themselves occasionally. During the rainy weather which preceded our departure from the colony, I remember seeing, nearly opposite Lyon's Terrace, an omnibus with one of its wheels sunk up to the axles, the horses out, and the driver and conductor gone also; probably in search of spades to dig out their vehicle !

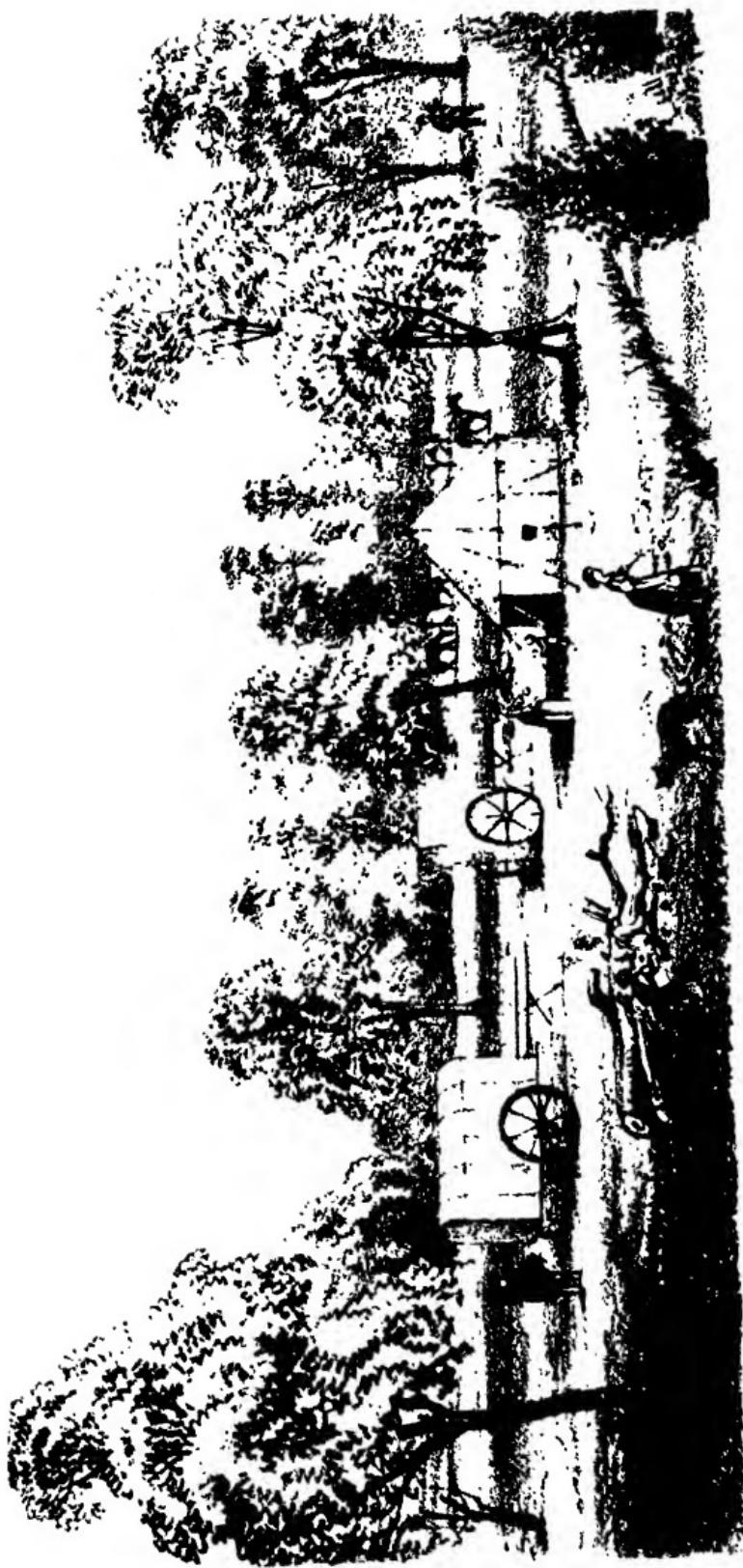
The drives referred to, when passable, used to be my favourite resorts, and in the spring of the year they can boast of additional attractions, in the shape of the wild flowers which grow by the road side.

Oh, these said wild flowers, what pleasure they afforded me! I am, unfortunately, nothing of a botanist, and could get no work on the plants of Australia, and very little information on the subject from any

one to whom I applied; so that of many of the most beautiful specimens I do not even know the name. There was one beautiful creeper especially,* with pea-shaped flowers of a deep crimson, with a large trefoil leaf of dark glossy green, and another with a smaller blossom of brilliant scarlet, almost the texture of velvet, which covered the ground in sandy spots. Extending from tree to tree, and spreading over the bushes, looking at a little distance like a delicate gauze veil of the most exquisite blue, was another beautiful runner whose name I could never learn; it grew almost without leaves, and its stem was so slight it could only be seen when quite close, so that really it often seemed floating in the air. Then there was the *Sheep Vine*, with its purple vetch-like blossom, growing in long wreaths; its botanical name, *Kennedia Microfilla*, I do happen to know, as I found it in our greenhouse at home among our most cherished creepers. Besides these, are the *Bignonias*, the common white variety of which is most abundant in the neighbourhood of Sydney, and two or three varieties of the white *Clematis*, which

* The *Kennedia Rubicunda*.

all grow to a great height, running up the trunks and entwining round the branches of the high forest trees, often clothing some old decayed trunk with a life and beauty not its own. One instance of this I remember particularly. In one of my many rambles through the bush, which I enjoyed more than I did anything else in the colony, my husband drew my attention to the trunk of a young tree, which grew to the height of some ten or twelve feet, with a few branches drooping downwards. Some one had, a few months previously, set fire to it, and now round its blackened stem grew the native *Bignonia*, with its white wax-like flowers, and bright glossy leaves, like those of the yellow jasmine. It ran up to the full height of the tree, twined round the remaining branches, and then drooped down again almost to the ground. The most skilful hand could not have trained it more gracefully, and a most beautiful picture it formed, standing out in relief against the background of the dark evergreen bush, by which it was surrounded. The evergreen flowering shrubs are far more numerous



A.M

even than the creepers, and some of the blossoms they bear are very beautiful. There is the *Native rose*, as it is called, which, however, bears no other resemblance than that of colour to the old garden favourite. It is known to botanists, I believe, as the *Borronia serrulata*. The leaf is small, more resembling the box than any other shrub I am familiar with, but with the edges indented; the flowers grow in clusters at the end of the stem, and are in shape, small cup-like bells of the brightest rose colour; it has a strange pungent perfume, which is pleasant enough in the open air, but rather too powerful in a room. There is also a native *Jasmine*, its flower precisely resembling the white *Jasmine* we are all familiar with at home, but the plant itself bearing more likeness to the broom. There is also the native tulip-tree or *Waratah*, as it is more commonly called, with large scarlet blossoms, in size and shape somewhat resembling a peony; and there is the native heath, or *Epacris*, of which there are many varieties, the commonest, perhaps, being one which grows in large bushes, and has crimson

flowers tipped with white. There is another variety, whose name I do not know; it grows lower, and the flowers are more of a scarlet hue; and another, somewhat more rare, with green blossoms. I have only named a few of the very many flowering shrubs that abound near Sydney. Besides these are many beautiful Orchidaceous and bulbous rooted plants. Of the former I may mention the *Rock Lily*, which, with a coarse, ugly leaf, bears the most beautiful flower of the bush. It is generally of a pale straw colour, though I have seen them of a rich mottled tortoise-shell hue, and it grows in delicate little bells, along a stem perhaps a foot in length, which hangs in a graceful curve. I have seen young ladies wear these blossoms in their hair, and can bear witness how very well they looked. The only other plant which, in my opinion, can contest the palm of beauty with this feather-like flower, though quite unlike it in form and hue, is that known as the *Fringed Violet*, a most exquisite little thing, of the *Iris* tribe, I fancy; it is formed of three leaves, so smooth and glossy in texture as to resemble satin, each leaf being

surrounded with a most delicate little fringe, such as might serve to adorn the train of a fairy queen. In colour it is the most delicate lilac or peach; it has a bulbous root, and long narrow leaves almost resembling grass. This beautiful little flower is most difficult to transplant, and I am not aware that it has ever been brought to this country. We gathered some of its seeds, which we brought carefully home, but have not succeeded in inducing any of them to grow; perhaps *roots* might have done better; but stove-heat will not start the seed.

I have been tempted into a somewhat long dissertation on the Bush-flowers, and can only plead as an excuse, their great beauty, and the intense enjoyment that I derived from making acquaintance with them. Among the smaller trees, or larger shrubs, of the bush may be mentioned the *Acacias*, of which the variety is almost endless. I collected specimens of some eighteen or twenty different species growing in the immediate vicinity of Sydney; and I believe the varieties scattered over the different colonies amount to nearly a hundred; they are very

beautiful, and make one think of the French name for the laburnum, "*pluie d'or*." The credit of a still better comparison belongs to, I think, Colonel Mundy, who says their branches look as if laden with "a golden snow-storm." The *Banksias*, again, form some of the intermediate growth of the bush. Among them may be mentioned the *Honeysuckle* or *Bottle-washer tree*; whence the derivation of its former name I never could learn; the latter it is easy to account for, as the flowers are in the form of long round tubes, composed of rough spiky fibres, and the possibility might well be suggested of using them in the manner their name implies. The trees of larger growth are almost all of the *Eucalyptus* tribe, characterized by their dark sombre colour, the length and narrowness of their leaves, and the fact of their shedding their bark instead of their foliage. They all bear white blossoms in the spring, which have a strong perfume, and quite scent the air. The principal distinction between them is in their bark, and it requires a somewhat practised eye to distinguish between the *Red*, *White*, and *Spotted*

Gums, the *Stringy Bark*, and *Iron Bark*, all of which trees are extensively employed for building purposes. Around Sydney very few specimens remain of the original growth of the forest; the timber has all been cut down, and the young wood which has sprung up can give one a very poor idea of what these same trees are when they attain their full size. Here and there, it is true, a tall gum-tree raises its head, whose white stem and spreading branches, often nearly void of foliage, make one compare it to some hoary patriarch, a relic of byegone times ; but, in general, the trees near Sydney are low and bushy, many of them still only forming brushwood ; so that when you get into the centre of this scrub, you may fairly call yourself in the bush, for you can often not see many yards before you. Indeed, for this reason, the country in the immediate neighbourhood of Sydney generally deserves this name far better than that more in the interior, for there the trees grow farther apart, and are very tall, with few lower branches, so that the view is comparatively clear, and there is not generally much

underwood; but in fine seasons the country boasts of a fair enough sward of grass. Of course, I must be understood as referring to the parts of the colony I myself have visited. In the far interior, I am aware that there are large tracts of country completely covered with scrub, and thus totally unserviceable for all purposes of pasturage. Some, indeed, are quite impenetrable, even to the aborigines. My husband relates that on one occasion, during one of his exploring excursions in the far north-west, he encountered one of these dense jungles or thickets, and on proposing to enter it on horseback, was told by his black guide, "Bail yarraman (no horse), only white fellow." Of a second he was informed, "Bail white fellow, only black fellow;" and of a third, "Bail black fellow"—"Bail," the aboriginal negative, meaning that not even a native could penetrate this scrub. Of course, in no part of the neighbourhood of Sydney does the bush come up to this last description; but even there a ramble through it is not a little detrimental to ladies' dresses; indeed, I much doubt whether many of the

colonial ladies ever venture on such expeditions. In the summer season, indeed, it would not be very safe to undertake them, as the snakes of New South Wales are very numerous, and, with few exceptions, very deadly; but in early spring and autumn such rambles are truly delightful, especially to the stranger, to whom every object has the extra attraction of novelty. • On the occasion of our last visit to Sydney, we were residing some eight or ten miles out of town, in the very centre of a wilderness of trees and flowers; and our host and hostess used to be not a little astonished at the unfailing delight we had in exploring the neighbourhood, always coming home laden with flowers. I pressed and dried a great many of them, hoping to be able to give some idea to our friends at home of their great variety and beauty; but they so completely lost their colour, that latterly I took to sketching them; and although, from never having previously attempted flower drawing, I did not succeed as well as I could have wished, still my sketches gave a better idea of their form and colour than

was suggested by their own poor withered remains. Among the many drives round Sydney, there is one which I have not yet mentioned, which, on account of the poor soil through which it passes, is more richly bordered with floral treasures than perhaps any other—I allude to the Botany Road. Its name, however, suggests its only attraction; for were it not for the many new and beautiful plants and flowers which flourish here, it would be as unpicturesque and uninteresting a drive or ride as it is possible to imagine, passing through a perfectly flat level tract entirely without wood, and by turns an arid sandy plain and a boggy marsh. These marshes, known as the Lachlan Swamps, are, however, of very great importance to Sydney, as, from the water collected here and kept in large reservoirs, the whole of the town is supplied. Botany Bay, by which name the whole colony of New South Wales seemed once to be best known, is situated some five or six miles to the south of Sydney. One wonders why it obtained such a lasting notoriety; for though, it is true, it was here the first detachment of

convicts were landed, under the orders, I think, of Captain Phillip, the harbour was soon discovered to be far inferior to that of Port Jackson, on the headlands of which Sydney is now built; and the idea of forming a settlement at Botany was soon abandoned. On the north side of Botany Bay there is now a good hotel, with a very fair road leading to it from Sydney. It is a favourite resort for the honeymoon, I believe, among certain classes; but I cannot fancy it can boast much to recommend it as a residence, even at such a time. Its principal attractions are the neatly kept pleasure grounds in front, sloping down to the Bay, and a small menagerie dignified by the name of *Zoological Gardens*. The few *native* animals among the collection were the only ones that possessed much interest for me. There was a Kangaroo, of course, and a Native dog, a creature of the Jackal tribe, I believe; in colour it is generally a sandy, reddish brown, sometimes brindled, with a fine bushy tail. There was also the Native Bear, a small animal perhaps the size of a large Persian cat, but far more clumsily

made; it has sharp claws, and a very knowing wicked little face; the fur is long and rough, and of a brown colour; it lives in trees, and feeds, I believe, on the bark and young shoots. Of native birds, there was the Emu, with its long legs and curious *fibry* feathers. This creature does not fly, not having the *de quoi*, but runs at a tremendous pace, putting the swiftest horses and hounds to their mettle to overtake it; when overtaken, I have heard it said that it defends itself by kicking its pursuers, and that a well-directed kick has been known to break a horse's leg; but I should think this somewhat mythical. There were also specimens of the Native companion (a species of crane), of the Pelican, the Black Swan, and many other less remarkable members of the feathered tribes whose names I do not recollect.

On the other side of Botany Bay may be seen the monument to La Perouse, the unfortunate French navigator, who was killed in a skirmish with the natives of one of the South Sea Islands. There is no carriage track leading to it, so I only saw it from a distance. Falling into Botany Bay

is a small river known as Cook's River; if so called in honour of the great navigator, it was certainly no great compliment to him. It is only navigable for a short distance, and that merely for little boats; it passes close to the flourishing suburb of New Town, and then through a densely-wooded country, known as "The Forest;" beyond that I do not know its course, but it soon dwindles down into a very insignificant stream. With New Town I may end my account of the suburbs of Sydney; it is certainly one of the largest and most flourishing, containing some pretty villa residences, and a rather picturesque church, which reminds one somewhat of the country churches in England.

I believe that the land here is held by a very doubtful sort of tenure, and that at present there is a lawsuit going on, which, if decided in favour of the plaintiff, will turn more than half the population out of their houses. It is too long and intricate a case for me to know much about, nor do I imagine that the details could possess much interest for any one in this country, supposing I happened to be familiar with them.

CHAPTER IV.

The climate of New South Wales—Variations of temperature—Australian children—Their precocity in every respect—Resemblance to Americans—Sydney society—Beadledom at the antipodes—The squatters—The Sydney season—Balls and pic-nics—Fish—Beauties of the Harbour—The Paramatta River—Oranges and orange groves—The Town of Paramatta—Traditions of the Female Factory.

I HAVE heard so many different opinions touching the climate of New South Wales, even from old residents, that I must be excused if, with my limited experience, I have not quite made up my mind on the subject, whether to praise or condemn. The winter months, from March to September, are generally very delightful, reminding one of a fine August or September at home. The air is fresh and bracing, the sky bright and cloudless, and there is that peculiar clearness in the atmosphere which adds so

great a charm to the beauty of a landscape; but even at this time, that great drawback to the Australian climate, its variableness, is very remarkable. The mornings are quite chilly, and a fire is a very agreeable companion; you venture out, perhaps, in a comfortable warm dress and cloth cloak, and by twelve o'clock you long for the lightest of muslins; the power attained by the sun at midday, even in the middle of the winter, is always so great. Towards evening, again, it becomes quite cold and even frosty; I do not remember ever noticing the variations of the thermometer during the four-and-twenty hours, but can easily believe there is frequently a difference of from 20 to 30 degrees. In the summer the alternations must be still greater. I remember the only New Year's Eve I was in the colony, being quite glad to draw my chair close to a large wood fire (this, I must mention, was during a heavy flood, when the country round was fairly inundated), and a week after, the heat was so great that the thermometer in my bedroom, the coolest room in the house, stood at a hundred and two! These excessive varia-

tions of the temperature must necessarily be productive of a great deal of illness. In the interior, where, from the description of their dwellings and the character of their avocations, people are more exposed to these changes of climate than in town, they produce rheumatism in all its forms, and in many parts of the country fever and ague also; but still, on the whole, I suppose the climate must be admitted to be healthy. It is said to be particularly favourable to children and very old people; the former assertion I can well believe, as the children are generally the very picture of health, but the latter I do not understand so well, as there seems to be so very small a proportion of old people among the population of New South Wales; and those few seem generally to have grown old before their time. The remark, perhaps, is only meant to apply to those who, with a good sound constitution, come to the colony just as old age is creeping on them, and to these the change to a mild *dry* atmosphere (provided they are not likely to be exposed to its vicissitudes) may be beneficial, but I should not think the native-born Australians,

or those who have emigrated in childhood, are likely to be a very long-lived race. They arrive so early at maturity—boys and girls of fourteen or fifteen looking quite young men and women—I should fancy in the course of a generation or two, that the European population of Australia will bear a great resemblance to that of America. I have already said how much struck I was by the typical similarity of the first Australian youths I had seen, in figure, features, and expression, to my pre-conceived notion of Yankees, which notions were not wholly derived from *Punch*. The girls are, generally speaking, pretty; their great want no doubt is complexion, but this is more than compensated for by their fine eyes and hair, and slight graceful figures. Still, as we read of American beauties, they go off very soon, and at four or five-and-twenty have generally a worn faded look. There is something American, too, in the treatment of children and young people in Australia; they are, if I may venture to say it, terribly spoilt; everything is made to give way to them, and it is half-amusing, half-sad to hear quite little

things passing their opinions on every subject, expressing their wishes, and expecting everything to give way to their inclinations. One would almost prefer the discipline of former times, in which our grandfathers and grandmothers were trained up. Perhaps my remarks on this subject are somewhat of a sweeping nature, but they are not only the result of my own observations, but an expression of the opinions of others whose experience better qualifies them to have a voice on the subject; and though, no doubt, there are many parents who have somewhat stricter, and in my opinion more sensible, notions on the subject of education, yet, with the greater number, excessive indulgence and freedom of speech and action seem the order of the day.—Query, is this peculiar feature of moral training, viz., the accordance of the fullest liberty or license to those least able to use it discreetly, the invariable characteristic of all free and enlightened states and individuals?

Perhaps I may here venture to say a little of Sydney society, but, in hazarding a few remarks on the subject, I must premise by

stating that from my short residence in the colony, my personal experience is very limited, and I can only pretend to give some notion of the impressions it made on me, a perfect stranger, possessed however of more opportunities of mixing in it than occurs to most new arrivals, from the fact of my husband having been formerly for many years resident in the colony. I may begin by stating that the present tone of society is, so far as I could gather, very much higher and better than it was in the late Governor's time; or at all events during the latter years of his residence. To compare small things, or rather people, with great ones, there is much the same difference between the *renommée* of Government House under the late Sir Charles Fitzroy and at present under Sir Wm. Dennison, as between that of the Pavilion during George the Fourth's time, and Osborne under the rule of our present Gracious Sovereign; and it must be admitted that abroad, as well as at home, the private lives of the most exalted individuals of the land cannot fail to have a great influence on the moral tone of the community at large.

But to pass on to society as it now exists; it may not seem very surprising that in Sydney, as in our country towns at home, the community should be very much divided into cliques, the leading class piquing itself very much on its exclusiveness; but of course here, as elsewhere, great wealth is an "open sesame," that there is no notwithstanding; and it is only the union of obscurity and poverty with disgrace or crime, that is so carefully shunned, so unsparingly stigmatized. The officers of government, civil, military, and naval, the heads of the learned professions, and the leading members of Parliament (so called) are, however, the acknowledged representatives of Antipodean aristocracy; and somewhat amused I used to be at their amazing appreciation of their respective dignities, and the eagerness with which they hug and cherish their official, parliamentary, and police-office prefixes, of *honourable* or *worshipful*, and the equally esteemed adjuncts, M.P., M.L.C., J.P., &c., &c. All this exaggerated respect for office and minor colonial dignities reminded me not seldom of the well-known papers on "Beadledom," making me imagine

Sydney must be decidedly a city of refuge, if not the last stronghold, of that respectable institution.

However, when we take into consideration the peculiar circumstances under which the colony was first formed, and the great number of more than doubtful characters who were, and perhaps still are to be met with in it, we cannot wonder at the existence of a very decided desire on the part of the more respectable classes to acquire what may be described as *testimonials* of respectability, and rather to hold themselves aloof from those not similarly *décorés*. One might suggest, no doubt, a higher standard of respectability than that universally acknowledged in the colony, which partakes somewhat of the character of the test of "keeping a gig," rendered famous by Carlyle; but if we have not arrived at home, this indifference to the claims of *mere wealth*, and still less of *position*, we cannot reasonably expect a greater amount of philosophy in this gold-hunting colony.

There is another class which might fairly advance equal claims to the highest rank in

the social scale of the colony, but who, until lately, were little known in the fashionable world of Sydney. I allude of course to the squatters; generally young men of good family at home, many of whom having enjoyed the advantages of a university education, and not having left the old country till fully able to appreciate its refinements, carry away some fragments of them to their rude bush dwellings. They not unfrequently, too, contrive in after years, to induce some fair countrywoman to share their fortunes in the land of their adoption; so that there is often an air of more home-like refinement round the rough cottages of the far interior, than pervades many of the finely furnished drawingrooms in and around Sydney.

Now, in these prosperous times, some of these "pastoral nabobs," as a few of the most fortunate of the squatters may be termed, are beginning to afford themselves town residences, and the infusion of this new element into Sydney society, will, undoubtedly, be greatly to its advantage.

On account of the great heat of summer,

or perhaps because the Colonial Legislators then give themselves a holiday in the country, the winter months are the season of the principal festivities here. The first ball at Government House is given on or about the 24th of May, in celebration of Her Majesty's birthday; as some twelve hundred persons are generally invited, it is not as may be supposed, by any means an exclusive or particularly select affair, and I have been told that extraordinary abuse of the Queen's English is occasionally perpetrated during the intervals of the dances, and that various eccentricities are occasionally exhibited at supper. Invitations to the private assemblies at Government House, however, are more limited in number, and only issued to the *quasi élite* of Sydney society.

Besides these assemblies, there are generally in the course of the season two or three large public balls, either at one or other of the theatres, or at the barracks, given by the officers of the regiments stationed there, and of course plenty of private parties, so that Sydney is by no means wanting in gaiety. A visit to one of these balls gives a stranger

a very favourable idea of the good looks of the colonial belles, who may be said to *light up well*, the prevailing style of beauty being of a character which perhaps shows to the greatest advantage in a ball-room. In summer pic-nics are much in vogue, and no more delightful sites can be imagined than those offered by every bay and headland of the lovely harbour for these *fêtes champêtres*. These pleasantest of parties are not quite so much in fashion now, I am told, as they used to be during the late *régime*. Of some that took place in former days under distinguished patronage, scandal tells some wicked stories, which would be very amusing if they were not very shocking. Oystering, too, used to be a favourite amusement with the young folks of Sydney, and every rock in the harbour was once covered with this favourite little shell-fish, but they are fast disappearing from the vicinity of the town, though the supply obtained for the market is very abundant. Prawns, and a species of crawfish as large as a lobster, are also very plentiful at certain seasons; but the fish generally is of a far inferior description to

that which we get at home. It is caught in considerable abundance both in the harbour and Botany Bay, and it is not surprising that from the advantages offered by these lovely pieces of water, that fishing and boating should be somewhat favourite amusements with the youth of Sydney. The regattas which occasionally take place here, are, I have heard, very pretty sights, and I can well believe it, as the beautiful scenery of the harbour would form a lovely background to any picture. My acquaintance with these said beauties, however, is somewhat limited, for I am such a very wretched sailor that I could never make up my mind to explore it in a boat. Once I ventured in a small steamer to Manly Beach, as the head of one of the many little bays of the harbour is called, and a very pleasant day we spent there, partaking of our lunch under the spreading gum trees, with the calm blue waters of the harbour on one side, and on the other the boundless South Pacific Ocean, with its huge waves breaking in tremendous force on the rocky shore. Another pleasant excursion is up the

Paramatta River, the whole course of which, but more especially the first ten miles after leaving Sydney, is picturesque in the extreme. The first spot you notice at the mouth of the river is Cockatoo Island, a barren rocky little islet, to which most of the malefactors of the colony are now sent, and where the few convicts from home whose sentences have not expired or been commuted, are still confined. These prisoners are principally employed in quarrying stone, and in the erection of docks. Sentinels are posted at short distances all round the island, and escape from it would be very difficult, more especially as the harbour is known to abound with sharks, and the most active swimmer would stand but a poor chance of reaching either bank of the river in safety. After leaving Cockatoo Island, the steamer passes several other small islets more promising in appearance, boasting generally of plenty of vegetation and even tall trees; some pretty villa residences have been built on them, as well as on either bank of the river, whose turnings and

wanderings are very picturesque. Indeed, as far as Ryde, a prettier stream can hardly be imagined ; on its banks are some extensive orange orchards, and the dark glossy green of the foliage contrasted with the bright golden fruit, forms a new and lovely feature in the landscape. From this neighbourhood come the greater number of oranges that supply the Sydney and Melbourne markets, and these orange groves are sources of great wealth to their fortunate possessors ; one was pointed out to me apparently of but small extent, not larger than a good sized kitchen garden, and I was told that either a thousand or twelve hundred pounds had been given that season for the fruit. Many new orchards are being planted, which will in a few years make the supply of fruit so much more abundant, that it will, of course, greatly reduce the profits of those at present in bearing ; but, in the meantime, their owners are reaping a golden harvest. The town of Paramatta is situated at the head of the navigation of the river, some fifteen or sixteen miles from Sydney. It lies very

low, and in summer the heat there must be excessive, as it has not the benefit of the sea breezes, which at this period are the very life of the metropolis. I do not know anything for which it is very remarkable; the streets are straggling, the good shops not numerous—altogether it is much like one of our third or fourth-rate country towns at home. In former days it was celebrated for an establishment called “The Factory,” for what reason I am not aware, it being a sort of house of correction for the reception of the female prisoners on their first landing, previous to consignment to private service, and for their punishment if returned there for misbehaviour in the colony. The inmates were divided into three classes. In the second, were placed the new arrivals, who by good conduct were promoted to the first, or by bad degraded to the third. The third class was consequently composed of the worst of these unfortunates, who had their heads shaved, were kept under very strict surveillance and considered ineligible for service; but from the two higher classes domestic servants might be chosen, who, occasionally,

were promoted to still higher positions in the households of the early settlers. Indeed, I have been told that it was no unusual thing for some forlorn bachelor in want of a helpmate, to select one from this peculiarly Australian establishment. The formula gone through on such occasions was something as follows. The would-be Benedict made his wishes known to the Government, which, with true paternal consideration, ordered a muster of its somewhat troublesome wards. When marshalled in fair array, the anxious wooer passed down the ranks and made his selection from among the candidates, and the object of his choice was then assigned to him for "better or worse." I have heard that from marriages thus contracted, have sprung more than one of the wealthiest families of the colony. This institution is, however, no longer existing; Paramatta has lost one of its greatest attractions, and, indeed, quite gives one the idea of a place that has seen its best days. Even the railway communication which has been lately opened between it and Sydney, seems to have done little for it in

any respect. There are a few good residences in the immediate neighbourhood of the town, but not so many as might be expected from the fact of its short distance from Sydney, and the easy access to the metropolis now afforded by steam communication both by land and water. The former Governor had a country seat here, but it has been given up lately, owing, I believe, to some colonial disciples of the school of retrenchment having induced the Legislature to stop the supplies for keeping up the establishment.

CHAPTER V.

Colonial government in the early days—Police regulations—The value of a passport—An awkward predicament—The Governor's prerogatives—A model editor—Emigrants and emancipists—The first constitutional council—Playing at “Parliament”—Legislating in earnest—Responsible government—New constitutions—Colonial munificence—A Brummagem aristocracy—The British country gentlemen—The Australian legislator.

“Toil not for title, place, or touch
Of pensions, neither count on praise—
It grows to guerdon after-days ;
Nor deal in watchwords over much.

“ Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
Not mastered by some modern term ;
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm ;
And in its season bring the law.”

Tennyson.

HAVING written something as to the present state of society in the colony, it may not be inappropriate to introduce here a slight sketch of its Government, past and present, although I must premise by saying

that my knowledge on this subject is chiefly hearsay, and therefore I will not venture upon dates. In the days of the first settlement of the colony, nearly the whole population consisted of convicts, and the military and civil officials appointed to look after them; so that in these early times the term of Governor was only another word for that of head gaoler of the colony. The powers attached to his office were naturally and necessarily very large, and, of course, those under him were armed with similar authority in their respective situations; and there can be no doubt that with such a population to keep in check, measures which, under different circumstances, might have been justly deemed cruel and oppressive, were actually necessary to preserve the proper discipline of a penal settlement. Even when free emigrants began gradually to arrive in the colony, their numbers were for many years so disproportionate to that of the convict and emancipist population, that it was not deemed prudent to relax, except by very slow degrees, and in the most cautious manner, the iron rule which was at first

a stern necessity. But at the worst of these times, I believe the *free* population had not much reason to complain of the acts or powers of the Government, so far as *they* were concerned, excepting that they had no share or voice in it, and that they occasionally suffered some little annoyance from the strictness of the police regulations, which at those times, and indeed till within a comparatively very recent period, were very stringent. As an instance of this, I may mention that all persons travelling from one part of the country to another were obliged to be provided with a sort of passport, signed by a magistrate, describing their persons, occupations, and habitations. All persons travelling without this very necessary document were liable to be arrested at any time, without warrant, by the police, and taken to the nearest police station, which might be a hundred miles distant, to be identified; and if this could not be done, they were passed on to Sydney, and detained until they could find evidence to prove that they were not runaway convicts. In some instances, however, the magistrate

before whom a real or imaginary delinquent was first taken would deal in a more summary manner, and sentence him to corporal punishment, more or less severe, according to the supposed requirements of the case. Many half-amusing stories are told of the scrapes which respectable people got into from travelling without these said passes. It is not, I believe, much more than twenty years ago, that an Indian civil officer of high rank, during a visit to Sydney for the benefit of his health, met with an adventure of this kind. It appears that he had a taste, a very unusual one in the colony, for taking a pedestrian tour, and that, in spite of the advice of his friends, he started on some occasion for the interior, on foot and unattended, and, alas! without the necessary *pass*. I suppose at the commencement of his travels his *outward man* was received as a sufficient testimony of his respectability, and no unpleasant questions were asked; but as he progressed farther into the interior, and his garments became travel-stained and worn, the police became more pressing

in their inquiries, and at last lodged him in the lock-up of a police station some hundred and fifty miles from Sydney. In due time he was placed at the bar of the police court for the purpose of identification; and, alas for our unfortunate explorer! the impressions of the presiding magistrate coincided with those of his captor, that his personal appearance bore a strong resemblance to the description given of that of some runaway prisoner; so he forthwith sentenced him to receive his quantum of lashes, and afterwards to be returned to the gang from which he was supposed to have escaped. The unfortunate gentleman's feelings, at hearing this announcement of doom from the bench, may, I fancy, be more easily imagined than described; but happily for him there happened to be among the chance spectators in the court, a gentleman who had met him in Sydney, and as the sentence was on the point of being carried into execution, he recognised in the supposed runaway a distinguished civilian in the East India Company's service, and by his good offices rescued him from his unpleasant

situation. I may be pardoned this long digression, as it may serve to give some idea of the manners and customs which prevailed in the colony not a quarter of a century ago. Besides the Draconian severity of their police regulations, the early Governors themselves claimed and occasionally exercised the most arbitrary powers. They could by their simple fiat banish from the colony any person who committed any offence which, in their opinion, would have a tendency to injure or weaken the Government for the time being; consequently the liberty enjoyed by the Press at this time cannot be supposed to have been very great. Indeed, on the principle that prevention is better than cure, the little weekly newspaper, the only journal of the period, was, I am told, submitted to the Governor's perusal before publication. Moreover, as the editor of this publication was himself a ticket of leave holder, and as such liable to severe corporal punishment, and to the loss of his ticket of leave if convicted of speaking ill of those in authority, it is not to be supposed that any very decided freedom of discussion

on the conduct of the powers that were, found admission in the columns of the Sydney Gazette. However, as the colony grew in population and importance, of course all these restrictions peculiar to a penal settlement were more and more relaxed, until the advent of its moral millennium, 1836, in which year, I think, it ceased to be a place to which convicts could be transported; although a large proportion of the population still consisted either of convicts actually undergoing their sentences, or of persons whose sentences had expired, and who were thence known by the name of expirees or emancipists, as they were more generally called. So long as this class preponderated in the community, the establishment of anything like the free institutions of the mother country would certainly not have tended to the welfare of the colony, and I suppose would hardly have been consistent with the public safety; but as their actual numbers were diminished by death, and their relative proportion to the free inhabitants of the colony still further lessened by the influx of free emigrants, the

time at length arrived when the population at large demanded and obtained a voice in the government of the country.

In the first Constitutional Council, two-thirds of the members were elected by the public, and the remaining third consisted of officials of the Colonial Government, and a few private persons nominated by the Governor. The powers of this first Parliament, known as the Legislative Council, were, however, very limited; there were, I believe, many subjects on which they were not allowed to legislate at all, and all offices of any importance were filled by persons appointed by the Home Government, by whose orders alone they could be removed; so that, after all, the grant of the first Legislative Council to New South Wales only afforded the colonists the satisfaction of playing at Parliament, and of amusing one another with a good deal of talk about "honourable members" and their "honourable friends." However, it served as practice for them, and for a little while they were satisfied with it, but soon began to desire something more substantial in the way of power;

and numerous were the complaints and petitions with which they began to worry the Home Government—documents, however, which were generally ruthlessly consigned to the pigeon-holes of the “Circumlocution Office.” It is amusing to observe the mixture of indignation and triumph with which the colonial patriot of the present day alludes to these petitions and their reception; great is his wrath when he hints at the effect the introduction of any question connected with Australia used to have in emptying the benches of the British House of Commons, and as great his triumph in his conviction of the interest *now* felt by the British public in colonies which contain in their mountains and rivers gold enough to pay the national debt many times told. But the fact is, that *now*, so far as Government is concerned, the Australian colonies and the mother country have really very little to do with each other, for I believe that they have all, with the exception of Swan River, obtained the supreme object of their ambition—responsible government.

Whether the colonial public is better

served under the new *régime*, than under the old, is a question which I suppose they have hardly yet had time to determine, but at all events, there is now a new field of ambition and enterprise open to the Australian youth, which was before closed to them, there being I believe hardly any instances of Australians by birth and education having been under the old system appointed to any of the colonial offices. The continuance of such a system of exclusion, would in all probability have had the effect of exciting in the minds of the rising generation, feelings of anger towards the Home Government, and would no doubt have precipitated the separation which sooner or later is supposed to be inevitable between a mother country and its colonies.

At present, from what I have heard, I should say there is no desire whatever for separation, but that the colonists are fully sensible that by such a proceeding they would have everything to lose, and nothing to gain. They could not desire a more absolute control of their own affairs than they actually enjoy, and at the same time they have

the benefit of British fleets and armies, and above all of the British name, to protect them against all aggressors.

Perhaps, no better proof could be offered of the kindly feelings entertained by the colonists in general towards the mother country, still called by them by the affectionate name of *home*, than the warm interest universally taken in Great Britain's successes and reverses during the late war with Russia, and in the munificent response to appeal for aid for the widows and orphans of British soldiers, who perished in it. For this object, one individual gave a thousand pounds, and five hundred a year additional as long as the war lasted. I believe, too, the subscriptions for the sufferers by the Indian mutiny have been just as handsome.

To return to the forms of government of the Australian colonies. I cannot of course pretend to give any particular description of them; but I may remark, that they are all more or less after the model of the British constitution, and consist of an Upper and Lower House—the Governor in each colony representing the Sovereign. The formation

of an upper house in a colony, is always I fancy, a difficulty ; it is not easy in a new country to find a body of men sufficiently distinguished by wealth, birth, or personal abilities, to give them individually, or as a body, that position and influence among their fellow-colonists which belongs to the House of Lords in Great Britain.

With a view to create such a body, one great colonial statesman proposed that a hereditary patrician class should be formed, from the members of which a certain number should be selected, either by the Queen, or her representative, as legislators for life, in fact as life Peers.

This plan, for and against which I suppose a good deal could be said, obtained little favour in the eyes of the colonists, and was a good deal ridiculed in the old country; nevertheless, as everything must have a beginning, I suppose that the colonial gentlemen who are entitled to prefix "Honourable" to their name, in virtue of their seats in the Upper House, think that in time they or their successors might develope into very respectable "Peers," even although the *Times* should be

so rude as to describe them as a “Brummagem aristocracy.”

Perhaps, it may seem strange to my readers, that in a lady's reminiscences so much space should have been given to remarks on the government of the Australian colonies; but the fact is, that there politics are so much a matter of every-day conversation among the middle or upper classes, that it is hardly possible for a lady to live a few months in Sydney, without hearing more about constitutions, ministries, land questions, franchise, &c., &c., than she would probably either hear or read of during a long life in Great Britain.

The reason of this is easily found in the fact, that at home the number of public men, or even that of the whole of the members of the Houses of Lords and Commons, is so small in proportion to that vast body which constitutes the middle class of society, that few gentlemen, and still fewer ladies of that class, take much interest in the measures of government, its changes, or the sayings and doings of its various members of high and low degree.

But in the Australian colonies, the case is very different ; there the number of legislators and public servants is so large in proportion to that of the middle classes, that any person possessed of moderate means and ability, and with a little spare time on his hands, can, if he chooses, enter into political life.

It is easy to fancy that to many of what are called the active country gentlemen in Great Britain, somewhat of the "village Hampden" order, who waste their eloquence, real or supposed, at Poor-law Boards and County meetings, this peculiar feature of life in Australia would not be without its attractions.

It is certainly a more worthy object of ambition to aspire to be a Legislator or a member of the government of one of these *skeleton nations*, whose vast proportions are yearly filling out at a rate almost incomprehensible to the older communities of Europe, than to be the great man of a country village, or to hold a respectable position in one's native county.

Taking, however, into consideration all the

pleasures of life in the old country, and its many disagreeables in the new, I do not think the ladies of the said country gentlemen would in general be as well pleased as their lords with such a change of position.

What I have said, however, may perhaps be taken as a fair reason why the ladies of Australia are generally greater politicians than those of England or Scotland.

CHAPTER VI.

Starting for the interior—Travelling equipment—Preparations for camping out—Our party—*Pro's and con's for camping out*—Not so pleasant during a flood—The low countries—Fleeing to the tree tops—Best months for travelling—The town of Newcastle—Hunter's River—The coal districts—Carrying coals thereto—Morpeth—A bad start—The town of Maitland—Our first encampment—The *reveillée* of the bush—The laughing jackass—Common bush birds.

WE arrived in Sydney as I have before said about the middle of June, but my husband found so much business to attend to both in New South Wales and in the neighbouring colony of Victoria, that it was the beginning of October before he was ready to start for the interior on a visit to his sheep station in the Gwydir district, on the borders of New England, some three or four hundred miles from Sydney. Most delighted I was at the prospect of escaping from the dust and confinement of the town, and beginning in earnest to taste a little of life in



THE BLACKS' CAMP.

the bush. I had become thoroughly tired of Sydney, more especially as during the five or six weeks of my residence there my husband had been in Melbourne, and I had been thus almost alone, a stranger in a strange land. Indeed, my sojourn in Sydney offered such a contrast to the many enjoyments of our country life at home in one of the most beautiful counties in Scotland, that it is not wonderful that I viewed the town and the manners and customs of its inhabitants through a somewhat distorted medium, and invested the whole with tints the very reverse of *couleur de rose*.

But everything mortal comes to an end; the months of August and September passed slowly away, and the close of the latter brought my husband back, and then we commenced in good earnest our preparations for our bush journey. All my newly made acquaintances said I was not very wise in venturing on such an undertaking, but the thoughts of a longer stay in Sydney was not to be endured, and as my husband's presence up the country was urgently required, I did not hesitate about accompany-

ing him. Besides, I felt some confidence in my own powers of making light of the inconveniences and hardships incidental to travelling, and anticipated much interest in seeing the interior of a country so little known to me, so that it was with much pleasure that I commenced making the necessary preparations for the journey. The very novelty was of itself exciting and amusing. We had brought out with us a dog-cart built at home under my husband's directions, in anticipation of our bush journey; in appearance it was much like the ordinary run of such vehicles, or their plebeian cousin—the baker's cart—perhaps somewhat longer and more roomy, the wheels a little higher, and the springs a good deal stronger than is generally found requisite for the macadamized roads of the old country. It was also provided with a waterproof canvas tilt, which formed a complete shelter from sun or rain; and as the seats were moveable and provided with extra cushions at night, it answered the purpose of a small bed-room, and thus formed a very important feature in our

travelling equipment. For our own accommodation at night we had brought out with us a tent of very comfortable dimensions, some ten feet square; also the necessary tent furniture, two small iron stretchers or Crimean bedsteads, as they were called, with cork mattresses, gutta percha rugs, &c., a canteen containing a small assortment of plated ware and crockery, a small table, camp stools, and washing apparatus.

Our culinary utensils were not very numerous, consisting of two or three saucepans, some half dozen quart pots for the manufacture of tea—the bushman's great solace, a fryingpan and gridiron, and a water-can and bucket. All this paraphernalia, our personal luggage, and provender for ourselves and horses, were to be carried on a tilted cart or dray which we had purchased in Sydney. Our servants consisted of a man who was to drive the cart, his wife who was to cook for us, both on the journey and when we should arrive at our station, and the girl we had brought out with us from Scotland, and who, to the surprise of every one and the falsifying of

many predictions on the subject, actually returned home with us, despite the inducement of the high wages of the colony, and to the profound despair, I suppose, of all the unmarried shepherds and stockmen on our station. The rest of our party consisted of our two selves, our little Jessie, and a lad of about sixteen or seventeen, the son of a connection of my husband's, who was desirous of seeing something of bush life, with the hopes of some day becoming a squatter himself. I must, in justice to the colony, state that this patriarchal mode of travelling was not absolutely necessary in the district through which we had to pass, as to within twelve miles of our station, there are at certain distances on the road, inns or small public-houses, professing to provide all necessary accommodation for man and horse; but my husband gave a very indifferent account of the greater number of them (which his ante-golden era recollections of some nine or ten years ago, no doubt justified much more fully than their present character could do). I own I required few arguments to induce me to give my vote in favour of

the more independent method of carrying our own roof with us. Now that I have had a trial of both kinds of travelling accommodation, I certainly prefer the camping-out system. If the weather is fine, and you are tolerably provided with servants, it is really very enjoyable, and in case of a day or two's rain, there are still the inns to take refuge in, as a *dernier ressort*. But without a good prospect of fine weather, no one who could help it would set out on a bush journey, for rain soon converts the roads into regular swamps, and progression is all but impossible. I have often heard my husband give doleful accounts of journeys he has been compelled to undertake, during heavy floods, across the low country on the banks of the Barwin and Bolloon rivers, in the far north-west. On one occasion, when travelling inwards from a very distant sheep station with an empty dray drawn by four powerful horses, he was overtaken in the middle of his journey by heavy rains, which terminated in a general flood, the whole country becoming so entirely submerged in the short period of three days, that it was

only by the utmost exertions of himself and his carter that the jaded horses could be urged on, through mud and water nearly breast high, to the nearest cattle station, some ten miles distant from where he was when the rains set in, the distance performed being little more than three miles a day! There he left the team and driver, and proceeded on with a saddle horse to his home station, about a hundred and fifty miles distant, walking and wading a great part of the way, and of course swimming all the intervening streams and rivers. On his return six weeks afterwards, when the flood had abated, to the station where he had left his cart and horses and their driver, he found that the water had risen so high that he and the other inmates of the hut had been obliged to take refuge in the loft! In fact the flood had been so extensive, that there was no hut on the whole line of road passing through the low country without its *watermark* out and inside its walls. Indeed, the inhabitants of these low districts must live in perpetual fear of being drowned, the plains being one dead level for very many

miles round; so that when the rivers once overflow their banks, there are no hills to have recourse to, the highest elevations in the neighbourhood being really the huge conical ant-hills. The roofs of their huts, when not swept away, form the first refuge of these "dwellers on the plain;" and failing them they have recourse to the tall branches of the trees. But the shepherds and stockmen not being "to the manner born," do not take kindly to this mode of life, like some of the tree-inhabiting races of the interior of India. These great floods, however, although supposed to be to some extent periodical, occur only at long intervals, and have hitherto been attended with less loss of human and even of animal life than their extent might have led us to anticipate. The human beings generally contrive to escape in the way indicated, and the natural instinct of all animals prompts them, when unconfined, to seek the high ground, however distant, before escape is impossible. Speaking of these low plains which constitute so large a portion of the explored interior of Australia, the concurrent testimony of all ex-

plorers would seem to prove that the farther you advance towards the centre of the island, the more entirely low and flat the country becomes, approaching nearer and nearer to the sea level, and it is now a generally received opinion, fortified especially by the discoveries of Captain Sturt and the lamented lost explorer Leichardt, that the actual centre is a dried up salt lake surrounded by a vast sandy desert, and consequently totally unsuitable for the habitation of man.

But all this is a somewhat wide digression from the narrative of our journey, so to return to our travelling party: October is, I believe, considered as favourable a month for setting out on such an expedition as can be selected. The nights are no longer sufficiently chilly to make one wish for some further protection from the weather than that afforded by the canvas walls of a tent, and yet the sun does not attain that excessive power at midday which renders travelling in the summer months of the year almost unendurable, at least to those who are not thoroughly acclimatized.

So, with a fair prospect of good weather

before us, we left Sydney one fine moonlight night, embarking ourselves, our four horses, and our two vehicles with our household goods in them, in a small coasting-steamer bound for Maitland, a town of considerable importance, on the banks of the Hunter (one of the few navigable rivers of New South Wales), some thirty miles above its junction with the sea. The voyage was not a very formidable one, as by six o'clock the following morning we were at Newcastle, at the mouth of the river. At the entrance are two picturesque-looking rocks known as the "Nobbies," which make the approach to the town rather pretty; they are connected with the mainland by a breakwater, constructed by convicts, which must have been a work of considerable labour, and occupied, I believe, many years in completing. Though a very bad sailor, I had contrived to get up on deck at the earliest peep of day, in order to see all that was to be seen. The town of Newcastle is principally celebrated as being the port of the coal district of New South Wales, whence no doubt its name. The whole of the

country bordering on the lower course of the Hunter, or *Coal River*, as it used to be called, abounds in this most useful mineral, which lies so near the surface (in many places actually appearing above the ground), as to be obtainable at the cost of very little labour. . Now that the primeval forests have almost disappeared in the neighbourhood of Sydney and other large towns, and that wood is comparatively scarce, coal is very generally used, and the mines are worked to a much greater extent than was formerly the case; still, I am told, so high is the rate of labour in the colony, and so indifferently are these undertakings managed there, that the Royal Mail Company actually find it cheaper to send out fuel for their steamers all the way from England, than to purchase coal at Sydney or Newcastle, although any quantity may be obtained there; and I am told the quality is very nearly equal to English coal, and is improving as the workings become deeper. In former days, a monopoly of the right of working coal was granted by the British Government to a company—the Austra-

lian Agricultural Company, I think it was called—who possessed neither funds nor energy to work them at all efficiently. Now, however, their exclusive right to dig for this mineral has been done away with, and though the company still retains its original large possessions in this district, it has no longer the power of preventing individuals or companies from working coal found on their own private estates; and it is to be hoped, that in a few years this very abundant supply of fuel may be made more available. After leaving Newcastle, the country on the banks of the Hunter as far as Morpeth, the head of steam-boat navigation, cannot certainly be called very picturesque, though the river itself is a fine wide stream, for an Australian river at all events. Its banks are flat and low, and considerable portions of them are in a high state of cultivation, that is *high* according to colonial notions, though probably Scotch farmers might hold a different opinion when they viewed the large stumps with which the fields are besprinkled.

Steaming slowly up, on account of the

many shoals and sandbanks to be met with in the river, it was some two or three hours after leaving Newcastle before we reached Morpeth, a dirty-looking little town. There was something in the approach to it from the river which reminded me of that to Liege from the Meuse, though of course in regard to its present extent, it bears no comparison with the city of Quentin Durward notoriety. It was about nine o'clock in the morning when we landed, and as the disembarking our two vehicles and four horses was likely to be a work of some little time, and the wharf was not a very pleasant place to linger on, neither did there seem to be any very desirable inns within sight, I walked on a little way with my little girl and her nurse, till we came to an open space, and then we sat down under the trees, awaiting the approach of our caravan. Our patience was doomed to be sorely tried, for the horses not being accustomed to work in each others' company, and objecting to the heavy load in the dray, refused to progress. One of them, on being much urged to do so, actually lying down and declining to move, the only

thing to be done was, to take the leader out of our dog-cart, and make it lend its aid to its unwilling brethren. This was rather a bad beginning to our travels, as much of the comfort of a bush journey depends on having good horses; however, trusting to get more efficient ones at Maitland, we made the best of our way on to that town, which is only some five or six miles from Morpeth, beyond which the Hunter is navigable only for boats, and for them only in rainy seasons. The road between Morpeth and Maitland is not very interesting, the only object of any note that you pass, being the Bishop of Newcastle's palace, by which dignified name his tolerably comfortable looking country residence is known. Maitland is a town of some considerable size, and from the straggling irregular manner in which it is built, may strike a stranger as being larger than it is in reality. It derives its importance from being the dépôt, so to speak, for the northern districts, and contains many large stores—I was going to say “notion shops”—from which the settler in the far interior gets his supplies of flour, tea, sugar,

wearing apparel, and other necessaries of bush-life. As we were likely to be detained some two or three days in Maitland, we engaged some rooms for ourselves at an inn, which was strongly recommended to us, and our caravan encamped in a small paddock, the use of which was lent us by our agents, this being rather too public a place for us to take up our sojourn under a tent. We soon, however, got excessively tired of our stay at the Mivart's of Maitland, as it happened unfortunately for us that the house was undergoing the process of white-washing and painting, and the only accommodation we could get was truly wretched, while the prices charged for everything were exorbitant in the extreme. So, after sleeping there two days, and finding we should be obliged to remain some time longer in the neighbourhood of Maitland, we determined to adopt at once the free and independent mode of living, and to pitch our tent in an accommodation paddock, some two or three miles out of the town. We proceeded accordingly to carry this plan into execution, and arrived at our camping ground on a

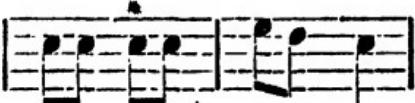
beautiful evening, shortly after sun-set, pitching our tent for the first time by the light of a beautiful moon. The sketch in the vignette, which was taken at one of our subsequent encampments, may serve to give a better idea of them than any long description would do. *We* took up our headquarters in the tent, and really managed to make it very tolerably comfortable; our two little iron stretchers which served as beds at night, and as sofas in the day-time, looked well enough with their bright scarlet blankets, and with the help of our cabin carpet, a small table, and a couple of camp stools, our small apartment, parlour and bedroom in one, was quite sufficiently furnished. The dog-cart, as I have before said, formed a comfortable dormitory for our servant girl, indeed it was dryer than the tent, so that when there had been rain during the day, and the ground was at all damp, I generally made my little girl sleep with her; our other servants, the man and his wife, used to spread their mattresses in the dray; while the lad who accompanied us, laid his on some oilcloth on the ground under shelter

of the cart; so that we all contrived to get some sort of roof for our heads, and with one, or sometimes two roaring fires, as close to us as safety would permit, we never, during the whole of our journey, suffered from cold in any shape, unless I except a severe attack of face-ache with which my husband was for ~~some~~ time tormented, and of which he was a little ashamed, as he thought it almost disgraceful that he, the old bushman of the party, should be the only one to suffer from the exposure.

We were late in arriving at our camping ground on this the first evening of our bivouack, and were very glad, as soon as we had got things a little in order, to test our powers of sleeping on cork mattresses under a canvas roof. I may here remark, in passing, that I very much objected to the cork mattresses, after a fatiguing day's journey they afforded but little repose and refreshment; so in future I substituted in their stead a couple of hair ones we had fortunately brought with us, which formed much more comfortable couches, and gave us more chance of a good night's rest.

Our sleep never lasted very long, for very early in the morning, when the first streak of day became visible in the horizon, we were awoke by the chattering and chirping of the birds—such a very pleasant sound.

I consider it is a great libel on the Australian birds to call them a voiceless, tuneless race. It is true they have not the song of the nightingale, or lark of England, or of the “mavis and merle” of Scotland; but many of them have very pretty melodious notes, like bars of music. There was one little songster I used to fancy whistled this

stave:  and another

this one:  I

do not know the names, nor did I ever catch sight of these little choristers, but often in the early dawn they have awoke me with their matin song. Then there is the Curlew, a night-bird, whose sweet thrilling call has a depth of pathos in it impossible to describe. Many a night I have lain awake listening to its low musical

plaint, till I have almost fancied it the voice of some spirit doomed to wander in mid-air, and bewailing its destiny in these sweet melancholy strains.

Another sweet songster is the Bell-bird, whose clear ringing note is generally heard shortly before sunset; and gladly is it welcomed by the weary traveller, from the fact of its always betokening the vicinity of water, and the probable existence of some little oasis in the desert of the bush, where he may find rest and refreshment for himself, and grass and water for his exhausted horses. Again, another bird with a very decided and peculiar note of its own, is the "Laughing jackass," as it is called, a species of king-fisher, which makes the woods ring with its hoarse loud chuckle, much resembling a rude sort of laughter. This clown of the bush cannot boast of a very prepossessing exterior, its feathers are brown and mottled, something like those of the thrush, but it has the large ungainly head of all the king-fisher tribe, and is an awkward-looking creature, in size resembling the crow, perhaps a little larger. Notwithstanding its un-

attractive appearance, however, the "laughing jackass" is a great favourite among the settlers, who extend to it the kind of protection awarded to robins in this country. The reason of the favour it enjoys, is that it is supposed to be the deadly enemy of the serpent tribe, and frequently even to come off victorious in its contests with these dangerous reptiles. I have heard one of these conflicts described, though I cannot say I have myself ever witnessed one. The winged combatant poises himself in the air fluttering over the head of his destined victim, and while taking care to avoid the deadly fangs of his foe, he contrives with his powerful beak to inflict mortal wounds on its head and neck. I suppose as these battles are generally believed in, they are not wholly mythical; at all events, the credence given to them is a very fortunate event for the bird in question, as it serves to protect it from the gun of the sportsman, who would fear drawing down on himself some terrible misfortune, by injuring this little friend of the human race.

Besides all these birds I have men-

tioned, whose decided notes go far to redeem the feathered tribes of Australia from the charge of being a voiceless, tuneless race, there are numberless others whose pleasant chirping and chattering, without being decidedly musical, have a harmony of their own, which is very pleasing. If the birds here do not sing, they are at all events a very sociable set, having plenty to say to each other; and as in the human race it will often happen that the voices of those who do not sing are the pleasantest in conversation, so it seems to be with them, and I was never tired of hearing the sweet low chirping sound they made. But I was the only one of our party who had leisure to indulge myself in listening to them, as all the rest had to be up with the first peep of morning, and busy at their different avocations. It is true we were stationary for the first two or three days, and there was not the same occasion for despatch; still, as the formation of good habits was very desirable, my husband used to rout up all the party between four and five, and set them about their different employments. After

our early breakfast he generally went into Maitland on business, and had I not been well provided with books and drawing materials, I should have found the days a little wearisome. However, as it was, I got on pretty well, and the evenings I thought very delightful, and much enjoyed the moonlight rambles through the bush. Altogether, it was a great improvement on being shut up in the small dirty rooms of a Maitland inn; though still we were anxious to get on, and were not at all sorry when, business matters being concluded, we could make a fair start for the interior.

CHAPTER VII.

Off at last—Roads of the interior—A thunderstorm—Making the best of things—Division of labour—Our order of march—Harper's Hill—Native indigo—Australian daisy—Refractory horses—Learning to be a *whip*—Town of Singleton—A catacomb of trees—Glenny's Creek—Bush fare—Edible birds and beasts—Bushrangers—Bush manners and travellers' tales—Truth stranger than fiction.

“ We forded the river, and clomb the high hill,
Never our steeds for a day stood still.

“ We had health, and we had hope,
Toil and trouble, but no sorrow.”

Byron.

IT was the afternoon of Wednesday, the 15th of October, that we struck our tents, packed up our belongings, and fairly set out on our bush journey. Our start was somewhat late, owing to our horses having strayed away that morning and not choosing to reappear until the middle of the day. However, as we were all prepared for a move, we

thought it better to be contented with accomplishing even a very short distance, than ignominiously to re-pitch our tents on the same spot, so we set out, resolving to make Lochinvar (a small village some six or seven miles from Maitland) our halting place for the night. In estimating the length of bush journeys, one must cast away all recollections of the rate of travelling in Europe, even by the slowest of mail coaches or diligences. In the first place, it must be remembered that the roads of Australia are very different affairs from those of the old country. Even the principal thoroughfares of the interior are really nothing more than tracks from one part of the country to another, and are more or less defined, according to the number of vehicles which pass over them.

So long as the land on both sides of them remains the property of the Government, when any portion of the traditional track becomes impassable, either from increase of traffic, from trees falling across it, or from any other cause, the traveller strikes out a fresh track for himself, to the right or to the

left at his pleasure, and returns or not to the original track, as seems best in his own eyes.

Hence it is often found in colonial travelling, that the distance between two given points on the same road varies according to circumstances.

But when the land on both sides of a line of road has been granted or sold to private individuals (whose ownership is exercised chiefly in the erection of strong fences), then only a limited breadth is reserved for the use of the public, and this over-worked strip naturally becomes a bog in wet weather, and a prolonged dust-heap in dry. When the increased traffic, caused by the gold fields on the main thoroughfares leading to them, is taken into consideration, their general condition can scarcely be imagined by those who have not seen them, and can with difficulty be described by those who have. It is true that during late years some money and labour have been expended on portions of roads near the larger towns, and turnpike gates have followed as a matter of course; but the present condition of most of these

thoroughfares is by no means calculated to wake those feelings of gratitude for their engineers, which were expressed by the Highland poet in the well-known lines—

“If you had seen these roads before they were made,
You'd lift up your hands, and bless General Wade.”

To return from this long digression to our start for the interior. I may say that we never contemplated being able to travel more than fifteen or, at the outside, twenty miles a day with our heavily-laden baggage dray, but, alas, we had often to be contented with half the least of these distances, so that an advance of five or six miles was not to be despised. Before we arrived at our encampment on the afternoon in question we were destined to have some slight idea of the first of the two conditions, which after-experience induced me to look on as the normal ones of the roads of the interior.

A violent thunderstorm overtook us, and in the course of half an hour made a regular marsh or bog of the whole country; I own to having felt somewhat daunted by the sight of our camping ground when we drove

into the Lochinvar^{*} paddocks. I do not exaggerate when I say that the whole place was a bog, however there was nothing for it but to make the best of things; the tilt of our dog-cart was fortunately waterproof, and inside it we were comfortable enough, so we wrapped our little girl in plaids and laid her on the soft rug at the bottom, where she slept quite soundly, while we set about preparing for our bivouack.

The first thing to be done was to light enormous fires all round, which to a certain extent dried the ground and the surrounding atmosphere; then we pitched our tent on the most elevated spot we could find, made plenty of hot tea, and quickly got to bed, awaking the next morning, none the worse for all we had gone through; though the ground about, it must be owned, still looked better adapted to be the abiding place of frogs than of human beings. However, the sun was shining brightly, and there appeared no immediate prospect of more bad weather, so that our spirits, which had been somewhat damped by this unpropitious commencement of our travels, rose again, and we set cheer-

fully about our various avocations. My task consisted in dressing my little girl, and spreading the table for breakfast, which one of our servant-women prepared, while the other rolled up the beds, packed up the carpet-bags, &c.; my husband and the man-servant in the meantime going in search of the horses, which would often wander half a mile from the encampment, even when *hobbled*—a precaution always necessary to adopt when fairly in the bush. For the benefit of the uninitiated, I may mention that the process of hobbling a horse consists in partially fastening his fore-legs together, by means of two leathern straps and buckles united by a short chain, which, without depriving him of the power of locomotion, renders rapid progress a matter of some difficulty to any except old staggers of confirmed rambling habits, whom nothing but a tether rope will secure at night in the open bush. However, all of our horses were tolerably well-behaved in the matter of not straying a very unreasonable distance from the encampment, which may, in some degree, be accounted for by the fact that we carried

with us a supply of corn for them—a practice formerly rarely adopted, but which increased traffic, and consequent diminution of natural pasture along the main lines of road, has now rendered necessary.

The horses found and fed, and our own breakfast despatched, the operation of striking our tent and packing the cart commenced, each of us setting about our allotted task; *mine* consisting in the somewhat easy one of washing the breakfast things, and putting them back into the canteen; this done I used to sit with my little girl under the trees reading or looking on, while she amused herself with gathering flowers, until at length the last horse was harnessed, and our cavalcade was ready to proceed on its journey. Our dog-cart, as I have before said, was very roomy, and my husband had contrived to make my seat very comfortable by means of a softly-stuffed back and footstool, so that notwithstanding the many hours we were often on the road, I never suffered much from fatigue. Neither was the heat very oppressive, even at midday, so long as we were moving, however slowly, as the tilt

protected us from the direct rays of the sun, and when opened before and behind, the current of air which passed through it was deliciously refreshing.

Our second day's journey lay across a high hill known as Harper's Hill, on various parts of which I believe many curious fossils and petrifications have been discovered, but it is difficult to obtain any specimens of these natural curiosities, as it is only the more practical branch of geology—metallurgy, to wit—which finds many votaries in the colony.

Growing here by the side of the road I saw, for the first time, the “native Indigo,” as it is called; a plant of, or allied to, the tare species, with a flower of a lilac hue, much resembling the blossom of the vetch, though somewhat larger. In the neighbouring colony of Victoria, this plant, or one of its near relations, attains nearly the size of a shrub; but in New South Wales it seldom grows more than one or, at the most, two feet from the ground. Its common colour as I have said is lilac, but I have seen a red and white variety—this change of colour arising, I fancy, from some peculiarity of the

soil. I also saw here, for the first time, a species of colonial daisy, not exactly the

“Wee modest crimson-tipped flower”

of our own country however; this Australian variety growing somewhat higher, and its blossoms being less round and full, without the crimson tint that distinguishes its sister flower. The difference in appearance between these sister daisies reminds one somewhat of that which exists between those fair blossoms of the “rosebud garden of girls,” the delicate-looking natives of Australia, and the rosier maidens of England.

The distance we succeeded in accomplishing to-day, was not such as to hold forth much hope of our bringing our journey to a speedy conclusion, but I own that so far as I was concerned I cared very little about this, for I enjoyed this open-air life exceedingly. People talk much of the delightful feeling of freedom and independence that the solitude of the bush gives rise to—with me it had more of a soothing influence: the vastness and stillness of these primeval forests formed such a pleasant contrast to

the bustle and petty worries of a town life. Yet there was nothing oppressive in the quietness and silence by which we were surrounded ; the faint chirping of the birds told of life stirring among the dark branches of the trees, and the golden sunbeams played among the leaves, and glanced on the shining white bark, making it glisten like silver. I should have liked nothing better than to recline among the cushions, and contemplate the scenes through which we were passing, but, alas, the *dolce far niente* is rarely the lot of mortal in the bush, and I was not destined to a long enjoyment of it. The horses in our dray soon began to give us trouble; my husband had procured a new one in Maitland, a fine strong-looking animal, from whom he anticipated great things; but it turned out, that torment of the colonial traveller, a confirmed jib ; so that though we had given up one of the horses destined for our dog-cart, still the dray made very little progress, and at the smallest difficulty in the shape of a heavy bit of ground, or the slightest rise, my husband had to go to the assistance of our ser-

vant, and by the help of a good stick and a great deal of shouting, to endeavour to induce our refractory steeds to continue their journey. Then of course I was obliged to undertake the charioteership of *our* vehicle; a task I particularly disliked, as I can never at any time boast of much courage, and my confidence in my driving powers was very limited. However there was no help for it, if I did not wish to be left behind, and I was obliged to assume the reins. In time I managed to get over my nervousness, and really became a tolerably good whip, which was a fortunate circumstance, as it was always at the most dangerous parts of the road that my powers were called into requisition.

It was not till the third day after leaving Maitland that we passed through Singleton, or "Patrick's Plains," the first township of any note that lay on our route. It is one of the largest, but I may also say one of the ugliest, of the small towns of the interior with which I became acquainted; the country, on the side from which we approached it, is a dead flat. Formerly it was

well wooded, but from the grass becoming valuable for pasture, all the trees have been *ringed*, that is a ring of bark a foot or so in depth has been cut out all round the trunks, and the trees have in consequence perished. But as the labour of cutting them down and removing the timber would have been too great, the tall white stems still remain. We passed through from a mile to a mile and half, of what may fairly be termed a *catacomb* of trees, and as I have a sort of half-belief in trees and flowers being endowed with a higher kind of life than is generally imagined, it made me quite melancholy to contemplate these ghastly-looking skeletons. We crossed the Hunter for the first time at Singleton; there is no bridge over it, but it is easily forded, except during heavy floods, when the only communication between the opposite banks is by means of a whale-boat, which is kept to ferry over passengers, and even heavy carts and drays may be got across by the same means. There was not, however, more than some twelve or fifteen inches of water at this time in the river, and though its banks are

somewhat steep, I managed to drive across it very easily. We got on the same afternoon as far as a small stream called Glenny's Creek, on the banks of which we formed our encampment, and very pleasant after the fatigue of the day's journey was the rest under the trees on the soft fresh grass. Our evening meals were very enjoyable; there was not much variety in the way of provisions; a large dish of beefsteaks, or mutton-chops being always the "*pièce de resistance*;" but my Scotch servant displayed great skill in concocting cakes and *scones* of different kinds, and we generally contrived to purchase a supply of fresh butter, eggs, and milk, from any small farm we passed on our day's journey; so that of plain fare we had abundance, and we always managed to do justice to it, as the bush air sharpened our appetites not a little. In giving our bush bill of fare I must on no account omit making honourable mention of the "damper," the great stand-by of all true bushmen. It is a large flat cake of unleavened bread, made of flour and water, without any yeast, kneaded together with

much trouble and labour, and baked in the ashes of a wood fire. I often had to partake of it as our only substitute for bread, but I never liked it much, and should consider that from its heaviness it must be very unwholesome to persons possessing only ordinary powers of digestion.

The traveller in the bush generally contrives to vary his fare with some of the birds, which in certain parts of the country and at particular seasons, are to be met with in tolerable abundance. There are parrots and pigeons of various descriptions, both of which, but especially the latter, form a very delicate dish, and are easily procured. The Squatter pigeon in particular is so little frightened at the approach of man, that it seems almost cruel to betray its confidence. Birds of this description will often fly up actually from under your horse's feet, and I remember on one occasion my husband pointing out one to me, that had been killed by the wheel of a dray passing over it. Parrots, though not held in such high favour as these pigeons, are by no means to be despised by way of a variety, and some of

them, especially the Lories and Rosellas, make capital pies. Cockatoos are not much esteemed, excepting when made into soup. I have never partaken of them even in this form, but my husband assures me that they make a very respectable *potage*, which bears a strong resemblance to hare-soup.

Any hopes of procuring kangaroos or wallabies, the best known among the native quadrupeds, would however prove fallacious, for they keep at a long distance from the beaten road track, being all very secluded in their habits; Opossums might be obtained were parties to employ a Black or two to procure them, but these little creatures are rarely eaten by the settler, though for what reason they are despised I really do not know, for I think them quite equal to a rabbit in flavour. However, we were unable at this time to procure any of these sylvan delicacies, for we were entirely unprovided during the greater part of the journey with powder and shot, having left them to come on by the heavy drays; a fact, the mention of which will prove how entirely unapprehensive of danger from thieves,

bushrangers or aborigines,* the Australian traveller is now-a-days in all well-known districts. A fear of being robbed never once crossed our minds. Most of the bad characters I fancy are to be found in the immediate vicinity of the large towns, and the gold-diggings ; but still, I have heard on good authority, that the diggers as a class are a much maligned race, by no means so black as they are occasionally painted.

It would be going too far to say that no greater number of crimes are committed in Australia, than among an equal number of persons at home, as the colonial papers prove the reverse ; but I do not really think that people feel less secure in the interior of Australia than in this country.

From the few people we met on our journey, we never experienced anything but civility, and a rough independent sort of kindness, with every disposition to render

* This word is almost universally employed in the colony when speaking of the "Blacks," the term *native* being generally applied to persons of European parentage born in the colony ; although to my English ears the former term sounds so pedantic that I have rarely used it when speaking of our dark friends.

assistance in any little difficulty. Not unfrequently, a travelling shepherd or gold-digger would ask permission to boil his quart pot at our fire, and in return would help us in erecting our tent, fetching water from the creek, or in performing some similar small service; and after all was done, would entertain our servants with wonderful stories of life at the gold-diggings, or of adventures to be met with in the far interior. Frequently many wild tales have been repeated to me, by my half-frightened servant girl, and improbable and exaggerated as they might sound at home, it was not difficult to believe them in the silence, solitude and darkness of nightfall in those primeval forests. Besides, I knew well that no fiction could exceed in wildness and improbability, the real histories of some of the early settlers of the colony—the “pioneers of civilization,” as they have well been called.

Some twelve years ago, my husband was one of the first explorers of the country due west of Moreton Bay. Innumerable were the difficulties and dangers he encountered in his endeavours to form a station in this

remote locality. The journal he kept at the time is full of accounts of hairbreadth escapes, and most unequal contests with the fierce aborigines. Indeed so wild and improbable do many of the adventures he met with appear, that a publisher to whom he submitted his manuscript, strongly advised him to omit some of the most remarkable parts of his narrative; as they would hardly find credence in this country, and would gain for their narrator the reputation of being a second Baron Munchausen.

CHAPTER VIII.

The town of Muswellbrook—A hurricane—Aberdeen—Scone and its neighbourhood—Crossing the Waldron Ranges—Murrurundi—The backbone of Australia—The squatters' barrier—A canine comparison—Eastern and western waters—Liverpool Plains—A dismal anniversary—The mirage—Myal tree—Tamworth—The river Namoi—A stock-keeper's cottage—Bush hospitality—The tree lizard—Unpleasant visitors—The plague of insects.

THE next small town through which we passed was Muswellbrook, a place of which I retain very unpleasant recollections, as we were detained here several days encamped on a dusty barren knoll close to the public road, and suffered much all the time from the oppressive heat, which we felt much more when stationary than when on the move. Of course we did all we could to make our tent habitable, erecting a second

roof of wet blankets over the canvas one, still, at times the heat was really most oppressive. We suffered, too, from a regular plague of insects. In the daytime our tent was filled with swarms of flies, and at night the mosquitoes tormented us sadly. At last, one evening we experienced a sort of hurricane, which, terrible as it was at the time, did us some service, as it dispersed the closeness and oppressiveness of the atmosphere from which we had been suffering so much, and inflicted sudden death on the ranks of our small enemies, for they troubled us very little for some time after. This storm of wind came on very suddenly, about midnight—the previous day having been calm and sultry in the extreme, and lasted for about an hour and a half. I was very much alarmed, I own, and fully expected our tent to give way; but even this catastrophe, unpleasant as it would have been, was not the worst we had to fear; we were in great terror lest some of the tall trees by which we were surrounded might be blown down and fall on us. Not unfrequently, terrible accidents happen from this

cause in the bush. It is often impossible to find a clear space whereon to take refuge; and these hurricanes come on so suddenly, and are so violent while they last, that they often uproot the tallest trees; and many a time has some unfortunate traveller, unable to effect his escape, been maimed or even killed by a blow from the falling branches. Most providentially, on the night in question we all escaped from accident, but our whole party was on foot while the hurricane lasted, providing for the safety of our several tenements. I hardly thought it possible that our tent-pole could stand the gusts of wind which swept past it with such fury; but my husband and our man-servant managed to keep it up between them, and the whole of our little encampment weathered the gale most manfully. When morning came it showed us the ground literally covered with large branches, and even some of smaller trees which had been torn up by the roots, and very thankful we felt that we had escaped all injury from them.

We remained several days at Muswell-brook, my husband spending his time in

various endeavours to meet with a horse, to replace one of ours that had fallen lame ; at last, an old acquaintance taking pity on us, parted with a favourite animal in consideration of our greater need, and we had the pleasure of once more making a start. We recrossed the Hunter some eight or ten miles from Muswellbrook, at a little township called Aberdeen ; and some five or six miles farther on, passed through Scone—a pretty little village, not unlike its Scotch namesake. In the distance are visible the Great Liverpool Range and the Waldron Mountains—fair substitutes in height for our Scotch Grampians and Ochils, and in beauty, I am afraid it must be confessed, surpassing them, at least to eyes which, like mine, have early learned to love forest scenery ; for the hills round Scone, like all the mountains of Australia which I have seen, are thickly wooded to the very summits. Our road lay across the Waldron Hills, or mountains—a spur from the main or Liverpool range ; and our next halting place, after leaving Scone, was at the foot of the pass, near a small inn known as the

“Highland Home.” Here we encamped for the night, making an early start the following morning, to enable us to accomplish the great undertaking before us. To cross one of the passes of the Great Range is quite an episode in a bush journey. In addition to the steepness of the ascent, the traveller has to contend with the roughness and badness of a road, intersected with tremendous ruts (which often become watercourses), and dotted over with large stones and pieces of rock, in avoiding which the most careful charioteership is called into requisition ; so that I was really not a little proud of managing to drive our dog-cart over this mountain of difficulty, and it proved a still more troublesome business to get up our heavy cart. It is really often a very troublesome undertaking to induce a team of bullocks to perform a similar exploit. These animals are much more generally employed than horses in drawing the heavy drays which are sent up into the interior with supplies for the different stations, and return laden with wool for the Sydney market. Though much slower than horses, bullocks

are much more easily kept, and they are able to exist, although they can hardly be said to thrive, on the scanty fodder afforded by the pasturage of the bush. Generally they are very obedient, and give little trouble to the drivers, plodding on slowly but steadily, and accomplishing ten or fifteen miles in the course of the day; but when any particular demand is made on their energies, it is difficult to induce them all to pull together, and these steep ascents are altogether too great a task on bovine endurance. Their drivers declare there is only one method of inducing them to attempt a sudden rise, and be unanimous in a pull, and this consists in adjuring them in very forcible language—a habit only too common in the bush. I have heard a story told of a gentleman of our acquaintance, who had very proper conscientious scruples about permitting his servants to have recourse to such measures; and on one occasion, when travelling with his drays, he strictly forbade any departure from a gentle form of remonstrance, accompanied with a moderate application of the whip. However, it was all in

vain ; fair means were of no avail ; master and men were alike unsuccessful in inducing these obdurate animals to move, till at last our acquaintance, making a desperate effort to reconeile his conscience to the necessary adjurations, stipulated that he should be allowed to walk on out of hearing, and agreed that then the drivers might use their customary form of persuasion. The result was that the bullocks were soon brought to a sense of their duty, and accomplished the ascent without further trouble.

From the summit of the Waldron Ranges, I observed in the distance, to our right, a cloud of smoke, which excited my wonder not a little. I was told it arose from a burning mountain, known as Mount Wingen. With my usual love of seeing all that was to be seen, I was of course very anxious to visit it, but my husband dissuaded me from attempting the ascent on this occasion, as it lies some four or five miles off the road, and there is not even a bridle track leading to it. However, on our journey down the country we managed to accomplish the undertaking, and found it well worth the fatigue and

trouble of the long walk. After crossing the Waldron Range we came on the township of Murrurundi, a pretty little place situated on the river Page. It is the last township in the settled districts to the northward of Maitland, and lies at the foot of the Liverpool Mountains — the dividing range of New South Wales, the “backbone of the colony,” as they have often been termed.

These barriers once passed, the traveller finds himself in the Squatting districts, so called from the land there being rented in large blocks to the squatters, instead of being sold in comparatively small portions, as is the case in the more settled parts of the country I have been describing. Of course, it cannot be expected that I should be able to discuss the merits of the land question — a topic on which there is so much diversity of opinion in the colony ; and, as an ex-squatter’s wife, I may be supposed to have somewhat one-sided views on the matter; but perfectly impartial people might, perhaps, think it reasonable to inquire of those who join Mr. Dickens in calling the

squatters a race of cormorants and land-sharks, what the lands on which they are said to prey are fitted for? and whether, at the present time, or for many years to come, they would return a larger revenue to the Government if disposed of, or attempted to be disposed of, in any other manner? For my part, I have always thought that the conduct of those who would turn the squatter out of, before the agriculturist was ready to step into, the country, which, in many—I may say, in all—cases, the former has been the first to discover, might be compared to the behaviour attributed, in nursery fables, to a certain dog, held up for youthful animadversion on account of his conduct to “Colly, the Cow.”

But, to return to our caravan, which I left encamped on the outskirts of Murrurundi.

We accomplished, though with no little difficulty, the ascent of those barriers of civilization—according to the maps—the Liverpool Mountains.

This chain of mountains, some ten or twelve hundred miles in length, is better known, as I think I have previously men-

tioned, by the name of the Dividing Range, from the fact of its dividing the two systems of watercourses, which flow through the eastern and south-eastern parts of New Holland, the tract which is at present divided into the three colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.

All rivers whose source is on the eastern side of this range, flow into the sea on the eastern coast, and are known as "Eastern Waters." The source of all the other rivers and streams of the interior is on the western side of this range of hills, and they are consequently known as "Western Waters," all of which eventually empty themselves into the Darling, itself a tributary of the Murray, which falls into Lake Alexandrina, near Adelaide, the capital of South Australia.

On the western side of the Liverpool Range, where we crossed it, lies a large tract of level country, known as the "Liverpool Plains," over which we made somewhat more rapid progress than we had hitherto been able to effect, despite the rainy weather, which slightly retarded our movements. One very wet day I particularly remember;

it was the 29th of October, my birthday, and the recollection of former anniversaries only tended to make me more melancholy, as I sat shivering on my little iron bedstead, the rain falling in torrents on the roof of our tent, rendering it a difficult matter to keep in a fire.

My husband, more unfortunate still, was suffering from a very severe attack of tic-douloureux; and our little girl, by no means satisfied with the fate which confined her to bed as the only safe place, bewailed her lot most piteously. Nor would it have consoled me very much could I have seen in a magic glass where I should pass the next anniversary of the day—a vision of a burning sky, a desert shore, a coral reef, and a stranded ship; but such knowledge is wisely withheld from us; and I was able to solace myself by somewhat more pleasurable anticipations of what a year might bring forth.

The very heavy rain fortunately only lasted one day, and on the following day we were able to resume our journey, though the quantity of rain that had fallen made the ground very heavy, and we made but slow progress.

One of the distinguishing features of these plains is the comparative absence of wood. This, which is considered their principal recommendation as pasture land, renders them rather disagreeable to the traveller. In some places they are comparatively quite clear, and in warm weather the heat in crossing them is very great.

I have been told that the mirage is occasionally seen here to great advantage, but we were not fortunate enough to witness this phenomenon.

On the more wooded parts of these plains I noticed for the first time a beautiful tree known as the Myall.* The colour of the foliage is a pale, silvery green, and it grows most gracefully, the branches often drooping down quite to the ground. The wood is highly scented, being almost as aromatic as sandal wood, when freshly cut, but losing its perfume after a time. It is remarkably closely grained, and of a very hard texture, almost resembling ebony.

Tamworth is the principal township of the Liverpool Plains district.

* *The Acacia pendula.*

It is a prettily situated little place on the Peel River, a very small stream, though one of the principal rivers of the district.

One cannot but be struck by the great scarcity of water in Australia; the navigable rivers are very few, and the largest streams I saw in the interior struck me as containing little more running water than most of our small Highland streams.

This was my impression on first seeing them; on our way down the country they presented, I must admit, a very different appearance. It was in the time of very heavy floods, and we had, on more than one occasion, to wait days before we could attempt to cross the swollen streams.

The greater number of the colonial rivers being rapid mountain currents, a few days' rain in the hills converts them for a short time almost into little seas.

Fortunately, the banks of the rivers I have mentioned, with the exception of those of the Hunter at Maitland, are generally tolerably high, so that the damage they do the country is not considerable; but, as I have before mentioned, a flood in one of the large rivers in the low lands near the coast,

or in those of the interior, is often terribly destructive.

On leaving Tamworth, there were two roads for us to choose between, which both led to our station; one leading across the edge of the table-land of New England; the other, the Lower Road, as it was called, going by way of Barabba, and through the Bingera Diggings, in the Gwydir district; and on this occasion we preferred taking the latter track, leaving the other for our return.

Some miles from Tamworth we crossed a pretty river, called the Namoi, the banks of which are completely fringed with a graceful looking tree known as the Swamp *Oak*, so called from the resemblance its wood, when manufactured, bears to that of the English tree of that name. But in foliage and growth the Australian oak is very unlike our monarch of the forest; it more resembles a tall, very graceful pine; its dark green feathery branches curve down to the water's edge; for it is never found excepting on the banks of rivers and water-courses.

There is a somewhat similar tree known as the *Forest oak*, but it is much stiffer and

straighter in its growth, and has not all the the graceful waviness of its stream-loving congener.

While we were making our mid-day halt on the banks of this river, one of the stock-keepers on the run through which we were passing, who had formerly been a servant of my husband, came up to us, and was greatly pleased at seeing his former master. He entreated us to come to his cottage, or hut, as all bush dwellings are called, though this deserved a better name; it was quite a picturesque little place, situated so prettily on the banks of the river, and surrounded with a neat well-kept garden. His wife had a nice little dairy, and there was a good supply of poultry pecking about. Altogether an air of comfort pervaded the little place, which bespoke abundance of all the necessaries of life, and made one reflect somewhat painfully on the contrast it offered to the houses of the working classes in the old country. And this man's career had been marked by no particular success; the situation he occupied was such as might be obtained by any respectable hard-working

man after a year or two's experience in the colony. A wife, too, if an industrious person, would find many ways of adding a little to the common stock, even if the care of a number of children prevented her being able to take a regular situation. A woman's services are always in requisition in washing and working for the men of an establishment; and children at a very early age learn to give a little help too; and as in the patriarchal days, so now in the bush, it may really be said, "Blessed is the man that hath his quiver full of them"—a beatitude in the old country not generally very eagerly coveted.

On taking leave of this worthy couple, they pressed on our acceptance some new-laid eggs, fresh butter, and other home-made delicacies; and though they were, of course, more eager to serve us from having been formerly in my husband's employment, yet such offers would have been extended even to a stranger.

Nothing can exceed the hospitality of the bush, extended as it is indiscriminately by all classes, to high and low, rich and poor.

It arises, no doubt, in some measure, from the feeling that no one can tell how soon another's wants may be his own; and thus the full force of the injunction, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you," is felt and acted upon. But from whatever motive it may first spring, its effect on individual characters, both among the upper and lower classes, is undoubtedly good, promoting as it does a kindly feeling towards one another.

One of the results of my limited experience of bush society, has been to induce me to believe that a more kindly feeling there pervades the intercourse of all classes with each other, than is to be met with in a more polished state of society. People in the bush are really glad to see one another, and seem to have simple genial ways of thinking of things in general, and what concerns their friends in particular. Of course this primitive mode of viewing things will wear away, as these settlers in far-off regions become gradually more and more mixed up with the pomps and vanities of their own little antipodean world; even now what I am describing may belong rather to past times,

but I saw enough of it to understand my husband's repeated encomiums on the kindness and hospitality he had experienced in former days in these out of the way parts of the world.

The country we travelled over after leaving the Namoi, between that river and its tributary the Manilla, is well wooded, and I appreciated even the scant shade afforded by the gum-tree after the heat of the open plains.

Here, basking on the branch of a tall tree, I saw for the first time an Iguana or tree lizard, a common enough reptile in the bush. It is a very ugly-looking creature, in shape like an alligator, varying from two to four feet in length. Its colour is a pale dirty brown; the one I saw I could at first hardly distinguish from the bark of the tree to which it was clinging.

Its flesh is considered rather palatable by some people. I have heard it compared to that of a chicken and of an eel, and suppose it somewhat resembles both.

Its eggs, too, are sometimes eaten. I remember being much amused by a discussion on this subject between a philosophical friend

of ours and a Sydney lady. Our friend maintained the propriety of bringing up young people without any foolish prejudices on the subject of food, and in order to reduce his theory to practice, on one occasion set before his own children for breakfast a dish of the eggs in question. His fashionable acquaintance was exceedingly horrified, though in general rather piquing herself on her strong-mindedness. I think she excused her weakness by arguing that children fed on such savage diet would be apt to imbibe savage tastes and propensities.

At all events she had a natural horror of eating anything belonging to such a near congener of the snake tribe, a dislike in which most people would heartily sympathize.

The iguana, however, though like all the lizard tribe, seeming to bear such a strong likeness to the snake, has none of the deadly qualities of the latter. When provoked it snaps like a dog, but it has no poisonous fang, and there is nothing dangerous in its bite. Lizards of various kinds are very common in Australia, and are all perfectly harmless. There is one known as the Jew lizard, which name it is said to have ob-

tained from its having a long beard, which gives it such a ludicrous appearance. I do not know if it is common elsewhere, but I do not remember to have seen or heard of it.

I saw another curious creature on the journey which I thought at the time was a scorpion, but from the description I gave of it I was told I must be mistaken, and that it was probably some kind of land crab. It was about the size of a baby's hand, and had a dark blue shell like a lobster's, with a tail curled over its back. The Australian scorpion is very much smaller, and has no shell, but a rough dirty-brown skin.

Certainly, one of the principal disagreeables of camping-out in the bush is the dread you are always in of the swarms of reptiles and insects by which you are surrounded; not that you are a great deal better off in the log huts, the most usual description of bush dwelling, for they come in through the chinks of the walls and floors; and the new arrival must be very strong minded indeed who does not for some time live in a perpetual dread of them.

To particularize all the flying, crawling, creeping, and hopping nuisances with which

the bush is infested, would be indeed a troublesome task; their name truly is legion. I may, however, mention a few of the more conspicuous and generally known of the creatures whose existence in Australia forms one of the features which distinguish it from a certain green isle in which St. Patrick is said to have destroyed everything that was venomous—unendowed with reason.

To begin with the most dreaded of all the reptile tribe, the snake, of which there are many varieties in Australia.

The most fatal, perhaps, are the death adder, the black snake, and the brown snake; the former is a sluggish reptile, and never attacks any one unless it is molested or trodden upon; but neither does it ever attempt to run away, and when lying on the ground it so closely resembles in appearance a dead stick that it may easily be mistaken for one by the pedestrian. The black and brown snakes are much more active, and generally glide away when they catch sight of a human being; though I have heard that when pursued they will turn round and attack their enemy.

The Blacks have a story also of a large yellow snake, which lives (they used to tell us) in the hills round our station. They held this reptile in great horror, and affirmed that it always runs after any one it sees, and is able to overtake the swiftest runner on an ascent or on level ground; the only chance a human being would have of escape from it would be by running down hill. I cannot, however, vouch for the truth of this account, as I never met with a European who had encountered this formidable creature. Besides the snakes I have mentioned there is a green snake that lives in trees; the whip snake, very small and slender, like a piece of cord, but none the less deadly; the yellow snake, and a host of others, the bite of all of which is poisonous and generally fatal. Indeed, there are only one or two species whose bite is not fatal, especially in the spring and early summer, when they first make their appearance.

Less venomous individually, no doubt, are the innumerable insects which especially delight to crawl and buzz on and around the new arrival, but if the aggregate venom

of all the tormentors which simultaneously threaten the same individual were simultaneously expended, no doubt the result to the sufferer would be as fatal as a snake bite.

Ants of all kinds abound, beginning with the universal pest, the sugar ant—so called from its known love of sweets. A basin of sugar or a jar of preserves left open for a few minutes is sure to be invaded by these saccharine Vandals, whose touch is pollution, imparting a peculiar and most disagreeable flavour to everything it falls on—a fact of which most incontestable evidence will be furnished by the nose and palate of any one who attempts to eat or drink out of the same cup with them.

Then there is the large soldier ant, who generally sticks pretty close to the outskirts of his hill or castle, and if you do not trouble him he will not frequently trouble you, but when he does, his bite is for the moment like the application of a red hot iron. The pain does not last very long, however, in which respect it differs from that of the poisonous little green ant, which is absolute torture at the time, and its effects last often for several days afterwards.

There is no lack of spiders either, of all sorts and sizes, up to the large tarantula, or *tri-antelope*, as the common people persist in calling it. The most deadly variety of this species is that known as the *black spider*, whose bite is said to be as fatal as a snake's.

There are centipedes, too, of all dimensions, whose bite is very poisonous, and occasionally fatal. So numerous are they, and so universal is their *habitat*, that you can hardly turn over a log without arousing one from its lair. •

Considering the prodigious number of reptiles and venomous insects which infest Australia, comparatively very few persons are injured by them, but none can escape the chronic persecutions of flies and mosquitoes. The former rule the day after a fashion fully as despotic as that attributed to their Egyptian ancestors, and when they retire to rest at sunset, they are relieved by clouds of mosquitoes, whose songs of triumph during the livelong night are special sounds of fear to the new-comer, who invariably suffers most from their continued attacks.

CHAPTER IX.

Barraba—Going ahead—Bell's Mountain—The Slaty Gully—Getting *down* a difficulty—The Bingera Diggings—A panorama of hills—Crossing the Ranges by night—A midnight bivouac—The Bundarra—Keera—An early arrival—A squatter's cottage—Its surroundings—A station and its belongings—The “shepherd's friend”—Cultivation of grain—Carriers at a premium.

BARRABA, on the banks of the Manilla, was the scene of our last encampment. As it is only about forty-five miles from our station, we hoped when leaving it on the morning of the 7th of November to be able to reach Keera that same evening. However, as it was the last seat of quasi-civilization we expected to pass ; the last spot where we should meet with that fashionable lounge of bushmen—*a store* ; we had some shopping to get through, and were somewhat late in starting.

The road before us was very mountainous and rugged, and our horses were pretty



ROCKY RIVER DUGGINGS.

nearly done up with the hard work of the past month; so we determined on leaving our dray behind in charge of the man-servant and his wife, and endeavouring to push on ourselves with two horses in our dog-cart, in order to send back a fresh team, to relieve our poor tired steeds. Therefore, taking off the tilt and leaving behind all unnecessary encumbrances, in order to make our conveyance as light as possible, we parted company with the rest of our caravan, and set out, hoping to arrive at our station by nightfall. So terrible was the road or track over which we had to pass, that had I known the nature of the country, I should not have indulged in such a hope. My husband, however, only reflecting on his exploits in his bachelor days, was very confident ; forgetting with how many more encumbrances he was at present travelling. The first obstacle that presented itself was a high mountain, known as Bell's Mountain. The road over it, if not so steep as those across the main ranges, is certainly much rougher, and the ascent on the whole nearly as formidable.

This difficulty surmounted, we came down into some comparative level country, where we rested the horses and partook of a hasty lunch. We then went on again till we came to the banks of a creek, where a settler had formed his homestead.

The crossing place of this little stream was close to the cottage, and its owner came out, in the kindly manner of the bush, to give us some directions touching the proper place to ford it.

On recognising my husband, and knowing our destination, he strongly urged our remaining the night at his place ; however, as we were bent on getting on, we declined his invitation, crossed the creek, and pushed through a dense thicket of trees. At last we were stopped by such a deep ravine ! *colonie* gully. On looking down, it seemed almost perpendicular. The sides were of a gray kind of slate, whence its name of the Slaty Gully. To get down on foot was a difficult matter, and could only be accomplished by making good use of one's hands in clutching at the trees and shrubs, which grew in the fissures of the rock. To get a

vehicle of any kind across, seemed to me little short of an impossibility. My husband rather regretted the want of a rope, by which to lower our dog-cart gradually, the usual method of overcoming such difficulties ; however, as we had none with us, we could only do the best that was possible under the circumstances. The leading horse was taken off and committed to the charge of our servant-girl ; and with the assistance of the young lad who was with us in keeping up the head of the horse in the shaft, the vehicle was got *down* in safety. Then while it was at the bottom of the gully, the leader had to be harnessed on to take the chief part in pulling *up* the load. At last, after using most super-equine exertions, they contrived to accomplish the ascent—not a little to my astonishment, for it was really like walking up the side of a house.

I thought I had become pretty well used to these ravines before, but nothing that I had ever seen equalled this one.

Safely landed on the other side, we continued our journey, and at sunset reached the Bingera Diggings, some seventeen miles

by the dray track from our destination. It would certainly have been wiser to have remained the night here, in compliance with the suggestions of the innkeeper, but we had set our hearts on reaching the goal of our travels; and though around us

"The shades of night were falling fast,"

yet, trusting to the light of a full moon, and my husband's knowledge of the country, on we went, Excelsior fashion, higher, ever higher, till we reached the summit of a lofty hill, one of the rocky and auriferous range bounding our sheep run (which an acquaintance of ours once described as being infinitely more picturesque than profitable). From this eminence a magnificent panorama of hills met our view; very beautiful they looked in the soft moonlight, rising peak upon peak, stretching far away in the hazy distance. I sat down on a rock and gazed at them for some time, and felt I could well understand the enthusiastic admiration my husband had always expressed for his Australian home, even in bonny Scotland. However, I had not much time for contem-

plation ; it was getting late, and the night air was very chilly on that high table land. Not that there was much fear of our taking cold ; for, almost immediately on leaving Bingera, we had had to get down and walk, so very dangerous was the rough track we were following—now passing over the sloping sides of mountains on such an incline that it required a man's weight hanging on the upper side of the dog-cart to prevent its turning over, and now winding among huge rocks and boulders which in the uncertain moonlight it was hardly possible always to succeed in avoiding ; though so tired and wearied was I with the distance we had already performed, that I think at almost any risk I would have remained in the carriage, could I have obtained permission to do so. Our little girl, too, poor little toddler, had to run along by my side, though in some places where the road was very rough, she could not keep her footing, and I had to take her up in my arms and pick my way as best I might ; the rest of our party having enough to do in looking after our horses. In this fashion on we went for many a weary mile,

the distance seeming so very great, farther than it really was—as is always the case when one travels in the dark, or even by moonlight. At last, after accomplishing a terrific descent of a high mountain, known even in that hilly region as the “Big Hill,” we found ourselves in a grassy valley, through which ran a creek, the banks of which were, as usual, fringed with the graceful swamp oak. A wild picturesque spot it was, hemmed in on all sides but one by high precipitous hills. However, for the present we had done with the mountains, and our course now ran through the valley, following the course of the creek to within a short distance of its junction with the river, on the banks of which, some six miles farther up, our station was situated. We trusted still to reach it that night, but unfortunately the night, which had hitherto been clear, became cloudy and overcast, till it was at last totally impossible to distinguish the wheel track.

We had long since left the regular road, and even in daylight it required practised eyes to make sure of the track, so faint and

indistinct had it become. My husband's knowledge of the country guided us for some time, but his recollections were not very fresh after a seven years' absence, so that at last we were stopped by the creek, across which we could find no safe ford. It was now getting darker every minute, the moon was just setting, and it was after midnight, so we thought it better not to attempt further progress until daylight, being obliged to confess ourselves fairly lost in the bush. Indeed we had not much choice in the matter of stopping, for our horses were quite wearied out; so we drew up at a large log, groped about for sticks, and lighted a tremendous fire. Unfortunately we had no covering for the dog-cart, as the tilt had been taken off to lessen its weight, but we wrapped our little Jessie in a warm shawl, and laid her under the seat, where she slept as peacefully as she could have done in her little cot at home. For ourselves, we made an equitable division of the gig-cushions and wraps, and getting as close as was prudent to the fire, we prepared for our night's rest as best we might.

Fortunately the night was fine, though somewhat chilly, as the nights always are in that part of Australia. But besides the cold, we had another subject of complaint, namely, hunger. We had eaten nothing since one o'clock, when we despatched our last slice of meat and bit of damper, and had even boiled the last handful of tea we had with us, having made over our main stock of provisions to the servants we had left with the dray. We had fortunately a small flask of brandy, and a quart pot, in which we heated some water, and with the assistance of some brown sugar, we made a beverage, which if not very palatable, served in some degree to warm us. My servant routed out some eggs also, which had been given to us a few days before, and which had most happily escaped being smashed in the jumble over the mountains. These we roasted in the ashes, but when cooked, the difficulty was how to eat them; we had no spoons, consequently there was only one primitive method to adopt.

After this somewhat peculiar meal we composed ourselves to sleep, that is the rest

of the party did, but I was too much fatigued to close my eyes, so I lay watching the strange scene, and wondering what my friends at home would think, if they could catch a glimpse of us bivouacked in this fashion, with no roof over our heads but the dark blue sky, now studded with myriads of stars.

At the first dawn of day I woke the tired sleepers; the horses were soon found and harnessed, and before sunrise we were again on our journey. I was still at a loss to discover any traces of a road, but my husband soon found out a practicable crossing place of the creek, a short distance from our camp. Soon after we came in sight of the river, a fine broad stream, known as the "Big River," or "Bundarra," the latter more musical appellation having been given it by one of the earlier squatters, on account of its banks being favourite haunts of the kangaroo, in the native tongue also called *bundarra*. The native name of the river I do not know, for it has never been adopted by the settlers, and is now quite lost. In sight of the river we kept our course for

some five or six miles, the horses bounding swiftly on over the level green sward, until we came to a range of hills immediately at the back of our station, happily the last we should have to surmount.

Steep enough they were, and as I toiled up them "wearily, wearily," I felt truly thankful we had not another day of hard travelling before us. The summit gained, I saw before me in the valley below, through a dense thicket of trees, a cluster of white cottages, looking so picturesque, so secluded and peaceful, quite realizing one's ideas of an Arcadian home; and this was Keera, the goal of our long journey, and our destined resting place for some months at all events. Tired and ill as I was feeling, an exclamation of delight burst from me when first the scene broke on my view. A prettier little spot could hardly be imagined, embosomed in the midst of beautifully wooded hills, a fine river winding in the distance, the whole landscape looking so bright and sunny in the peculiar clearness and freshness of early morning; the dew still on the grass, and the birds chirping among the trees.

On approaching somewhat nearer, however, we found that distance had lent something of its usual enchantment to the view; a master's eye had so long been wanting on the spot, that a somewhat ruinous state of affairs was discernible: broken down fences, out-houses out of repair, and walks grown over with grass and weeds.

It was little more than six o'clock when we drew up in the courtyard, somewhat to the surprise of our superintendent, who though daily expecting our arrival, hardly looked for us at such an early hour. Very gladly I entered the principal cottage, which was to serve as our abode, though it certainly did not then promise to prove a very comfortable one.

It was a low one-storied building, some seventy feet in length by twenty-two in breadth; containing four rooms in front; the largest, the general sitting-room, measuring some twenty-four feet by thirteen. Next to it was a tiny little place, all doors and windows, which I made my own especial *sanctum*, and beyond this were two other rooms, each about eighteen feet by

thirteen, which we used respectively as a nursery and bedroom.

Behind, looking into the courtyard, were three smaller rooms which also served for bedrooms, the kitchen and servant's apartments were in a separate hut, another building served as a store, and the men's dwellings were still farther off.

In front of the cottage was a verandah into which all the best rooms opened, and beyond that was a pretty flower garden—the only thing about the place which had been got into any sort of order in anticipation of our arrival. It had formerly been a great hobby of my husband's, and the old gardener had trimmed it up so that it really looked very pretty and home-like. The turf was tolerably green and nicely shaven, and the beds of bright coloured verbenas, geraniums, and annuals, and fine bushes of roses, made it seem quite gay. A passion-flower hedge planted all round, in full bloom, also greatly excited my admiration, which was to a great extent shared by our little girl, who clapped her tiny hands with delight at all the pretty flowers.

Inside, however, I must confess, the cottage wore a very forlorn appearance. It looked more like a large barn than anything else. The walls and ceilings of some of the rooms were covered with a coarse kind of calico, but in others the wooden walls and rafters had nothing over them. The rooms, with the exception of the sitting room, were almost entirely void of furniture. However, in one of the bedrooms I happily discovered a large iron bedstead, which I had put in order, and laid down on it thoroughly worn out; nor did I, I am ashamed to say, get up again till the evening of the following day.

In the meantime my husband, with the help of our servant girl, did what he could towards making the place a little more habitable.

It was impossible to effect much improvement, until the arrival of our cart and some drays we were expecting should provide us with some few of the necessaries of life; still, what could be done they set about doing.

A pailful of water, some soap, and a

scrubbing brush in our servant's hands, brought about a great improvement in the state of the walls and floors, while my husband routed out an old table with a white cloth to cover it, patched up two or three chairs, laid some carpet round the bed, and with the help of some green boughs in the huge fireplace, and a bouquet of beautiful fresh flowers, the room soon lost its desolate look. At all events, I was more than satisfied when I saw the result of the proceedings I had been lazily watching; indeed, I question if I had ever before been half so well pleased with the most comfortable room I ever occupied, as I was with this most primitive barn-like apartment.

We had arrived at a very busy time at our station ; shearing—the harvest of the squatter—had just commenced, and every one about the place found more than enough to do; which was the reason so little labour had been bestowed in making preparations for our reception, for the house had really great capabilities for a bush residence. We soon contrived to make it very comfortable, with the aid of paper for the walls, matting for

the floor, chintz covers for the queer old-fashioned furniture, and muslin curtains for beds and windows. While lazily taking my rest I amused myself by planning these various improvements, and congratulated myself that we had provided the necessary materials for slightly civilizing and polishing up the place.

As soon as I felt at all equal for any exertion I was anxious to see a little more of our bush home. Accordingly, on the evening of the day after our arrival I got up and took a short ramble of discovery about the cottage and garden, extending my walk to the banks of the river. On the whole, I was much pleased with the result of my observations.

Our station, as I have before mentioned, was situated in a beautiful valley, surrounded by high hills lightly wooded to the very summits.

Besides being in the immediate vicinity of the river, there was a large, and at the time rapid brook, *colonics creek*, flowing by one end of the cottage, the ground sloping down from the bank on which

the buildings were erected, to the water's edge. On this gentle incline, and on the margin of the stream, had been formed the orchard and vegetable garden of the establishment, containing plenty of peach, nectarine, and apricot trees ; melon, cucumber and pumpkin vines, with tolerably thriving crops of peas and beans. In front of the cottage was the flower garden, which had so excited my admiration ; beyond it, and to the right, extended the vineyard, comprising some two or three acres.

The vines were generally trained low, to stakes, though in one place they had been trellised over woodwork, and formed a pleasant arcade to walk beneath. Beyond the vineyard was the stockyard, used for containing the wild cattle and horses, when driven in from the different parts of the run, for the purpose of being branded, or at a general mustering time. This stockyard consisted of about an acre of ground, enclosed and subdivided into several smaller yards by a high and strong fence, too high to be leaped over, and strong enough to resist the charge of any infuriated animal.

In another direction, behind the cottage, were the huts of all the men employed about the home station; and on the side farthest from the creek was the woolshed, a rough wooden building roofed with bark, some hundred and twenty or thirty feet in length, in which were conducted the grand operations of the squatter's year—those of shearing the sheep, sorting and rolling up the fleeces, and afterwards pressing and packing them into bales, prior to being sent on bullock drays to Maitland, and thence by water to Sydney.

I have been told that on many of the larger and better conducted sheep establishments, the woolshed is quite the show place of the station, being fitted up at great expense with all modern improvements for sorting the wool, and pressing and packing it in the most expeditious manner ; but, as I have before hinted, everything on our station wore the semi-ruinous look, which appears to be one of the necessary consequences of absenteeism in all parts of the world, and nowhere more decidedly and rapidly than in Australia.

In no part of a bush establishment is the

progress of neglect so rapid and so visible as at a head station. I do not remember whether I have before mentioned that this term of *head* or *home* station is applied to the residence of the proprietor or manager of a grazing establishment. In the immediate vicinity of these residences it seldom happens that any flocks are grazed, except perhaps a small one, of animals intended for domestic consumption. The great body of the sheep are located on different parts of the run known as out-stations, with a *walk*, *colonie* & *run* (query, are these two terms indicative of the relative progress of the *old* and *new country?*), attached to each, varying in extent according to the character of the country, and the size of the flocks depastured thereon. In tolerably open wooded country, the size of the flocks, I believe, ranges from twelve hundred to two thousand, but I have heard on plains and downs of flocks of four or five thousand and upwards.

Two of these flocks are generally located at every out-station, each under the charge of a shepherd, who, accompanied by his dogs, takes out his charge during the day,

and brings them *home* to the sheep yards (with which each out-station is provided) at night. Were it not for the *native dogs*, this latter precaution would be unnecessary.

This animal has therefore been nicknamed the “shepherd’s friend,” as but for its dreaded ravages, the shepherd’s fleecy charge might be suffered to range the wilds without his constant guardianship ; the necessary consequence of which would be that a much smaller number of men would suffice to take charge of all the sheep in the colony ; and the shepherds infer from this that as their services would not be so much in demand, they would not be so largely remunerated.

I do not know whether this is good political economy, as it puts one in mind of the old complaints of the improvements in machinery being adverse to the condition of the working classes, of which the very reverse has proved to be the case ; so, whether the *native dog* really is or is not the *Australian* shepherd’s friend, I do not take upon myself to determine.

In the neighbouring colony of Victoria,

the sheepowners in various districts have contrived entirely to extirpate the native dog, by simultaneously laying baits poisoned with strychnine over an extensive tract of country; but I have not heard of any association for this purpose in New South Wales.

To return from this digression to our own station matters: I have only to add that all the homestead buildings I have described were situated in a large paddock containing some four or five hundred acres, and extending on both sides of the creek down to the banks of the river.

Here all the horses required for work on the station were kept, perhaps some fifteen or twenty in number; and it would delight the heart of a British farmer to see in what good condition colonial horses contrive to keep themselves, merely on the natural pasturage, and without the necessity of any shelter being provided for them.

It is not usual, except on a journey, to feed horses with corn in the Bush; the grain used, when such sumptuous diet is considered necessary, is maize or Indian corn—not oats, which do not thrive in this

country. They are grown, but not for the sake of the grain, but for that of the straw, which is the description of hay most commonly used in the colony. We sowed, or to use the colonial expression, *planted* a small quantity of this Indian corn, with the intention of using it on our return journey to Sydney.

Besides this large horse paddock, there was a space cleared of trees, some twenty to thirty acres in extent, on the banks of the creek, known as the "Cultivation Paddock," where in former days my husband had grown a sufficient supply of wheat for home consumption ; but two or three unfavourable seasons had induced his superintendents to fancy that the best mode of securing a supply of flour for the establishment, was to give up cultivation, and obtain it regularly from Maitland. This is the mode now commonly adopted amongst the squatters; but though a saving of trouble, I can hardly fancy it an economical proceeding. It is true that the value of labour in the interior is enormous, and there is great difficulty in obtaining servants at

any rate of wages ; but then the price paid for the carriage of goods is also something very considerable. At the time we were in the colony it was at the rate of about thirty shillings per hundredweight for a distance of about three hundred miles ! and even at this enormous rate we had great difficulty in procuring carriers, the hilly nature of the country round our station having given the road to it a very ill reputation.

I have been betrayed into a somewhat lengthy and discursive description of our Bush home and its surroundings; but it may not, perhaps, be wholly uninteresting to the ladies of England, " who sit at home at ease," to know something of the abodes of some of their countrywomen, who are roughing it far away in the wilds of Australia ; and this sketch of our own station may serve as a fair portrait of the general run of such Bush dwelling-places as I have seen in New South Wales.

CHAPTER X.

Sheep shearing—The washpool—An ancient custom—Shearers and their habits—Scarcity of servants—Convict days—Chinese servants—A horrid story—Chinese emigration—*Revenons à nos moutons*—Cattle—An Australian stock-keeper—A hunt after a *wild mob*—Agriculture in the squatting districts—The vine—Fruit—Primitive wine making—Qualifications for a bush housekeeper.

“ We will rear new homes under trees that glow
As if gems were the fruitage of every bough ;
On our white walls we will train the vine,
And sit in its shadow at day’s decline,
And watch our herds as they range at will
O’er the boundless plains ever bright and still.

“ But oh ! the grey church tower,
And the sound of Sabbath bell,
And the sheltered garden bower—
We have bid them all farewell.”

Hemans.

WE arrived at our station at a very busy season of the year, the business of shearing being just at its height, and I was quite glad of this opportunity of seeing something of the mode in which this operation is per-

formed. The flocks are gathered in from the different stations, and first undergo the preliminary process of washing, a curious enough sight to witness. The washpool is generally formed in a creek or river, where the natural body of water is increased by the construction of a rude dam; a pen is then made on the banks into which the flock is driven, and from which the sheep are flung out, one by one, into the pool, by some of the sturdiest hands, who are stationed there for that purpose.

Extended in a line across the pool or stream up to their waists in water are the rest of the washers, and the poor sheep has to run the gauntlet of this formidable array, receiving from each individual of the company a thorough sousing, prior to being "passed on" to the tender mercies of the next operator.

There is a tradition that it was formerly the custom, after a flock had undergone this ordeal, to pass its shepherd through it also, especially if his personal appearance warranted the presumption that such an ablution would be beneficial to him.

Perhaps one of the reasons why this custom is at present more honoured in the breach than in the observance is, that the practice of supplying the men with large quantities of spirits during the process of sheep shearing has been very generally discontinued, a large supply of hot tea or coffee being substituted in its place—a change of system no doubt very beneficial to all parties.

After a flock has been washed it is sent back to the pastures for three or four days prior to being shorn, in order that the wool may recover its natural softness, of which washing deprives it for a time. At the end of a few days the sheep are driven into the woolshed, where they are quickly despoiled of their fleeces by the practised hands of the shearers. It is astonishing with what rapidity this operation is performed. The whole fleece is taken off in one piece, a very troublesome feat for a novice, I should fancy, but the experienced shearer contrives to despatch from eighty to a hundred and twenty animals in the course of the day. As the shearers are paid so much for every score of sheep shorn, there is every induce-

ment for them to get through as much work as possible.

These shearers are not generally a very pleasant set of people to have anything to do with. Even in their respectable moments when hard at work they are very rough and rude to their employer, always ready to take offence and be off at a moment's notice, and then sure to do all in their power to prevent others from offering their services to their former employer; so that stern necessity compels the settler to put up with much that is disagreeable, and that at home he would not dream of submitting to. But it is when the shearer has done his work and received his pay that his carnival comes; and he keeps it like a sailor returning from a cruise. Resorting to the nearest public house he spends his earnings in the most lavish extravagance, holding a sort of drinking tournament for the benefit of all comers, calling for champagne by the dozen, drinking it in tin cups out of washing tubs, and committing similar excesses, only rivalled or excelled by those of a successful gold digger. The duration of these orgies depends

of course on the amount of the performer's funds. I have been told that not unfrequently the earnings of a whole year are got rid of by their owner in a week or ten days, during which period it may be presumed he is never sober.

When the shearer's money is all gone, he packs up his scanty wardrobe in his opossum skin rug, and sets off for the nearest station where he learns his services are likely to be accepted. After the shearing season is over he generally resorts to the gold fields, or engages as a bullock driver or generally useful man, or adopts whatever other calling he knows anything of, or which most coincides with his tastes—always sure of being able to get employment at any station he may resort to.

Of course, in speaking of the wandering and extravagant habits of shearers, I am describing *the general characteristics* of the class. No doubt, there are many intelligent and industrious exceptions who invariably meet with *their reward*, by becoming, in the course of a few years, owners of property, and in their turn employers of labour.

A terrible drawback to the colony is this said scarcity of labour; how much domestic discomfort it occasions may readily be imagined. I have heard many old colonists speak in terms very like regret of the old convict days when forced labour was plentiful, and servants had very strong reasons for preserving a respectful demeanour towards their masters. Not that I believe many, if any, of the settlers in New South Wales would like to see the resumption of transportation to that colony, still, I fancy there are a few of those who, having once participated in the benefits of a system bearing in some respects a considerable resemblance to the Domestic Institution of America, have still a hankering after this establishment of the good old times.

Now-a-days, there is no one who has lived a short time either in the towns or in the interior of Australia but must feel that it is a universally acknowledged fact that here "*the servant is greater than his lord,*" and that the former confers an obligation on the latter by entering his service. No doubt in a new country, especially one teeming with gold, such a state

of things is not only perfectly natural, but perhaps, in a commercial point of view, even desirable, from the inducements it offers to emigration, but still it is none the less disagreeable; and this reversal of what people in the old country look on as the natural order of things makes it easy to understand why few persons in the rank of employers care to emigrate to Australia if they can possibly live at home, and fewer still stay there, after they have acquired a sufficiency to retire on. Speaking of domestic servants, I may mention that of late years Chinamen have been employed to some extent in the interior in various domestic offices, especially as cooks, and very tolerable ones they make, but I own to a great dislike of them myself, and never would have them about me if I could possibly help it. They are generally considered very quarrelsome, are easily offended, and so terribly revengeful and treacherous. While we were residing in the bush a circumstance occurred which, no doubt, strengthened my belief in this opinion of their character. There had been in my husband's employ-

ment a shepherd and his wife of the name of Howard, also at the same time a Chinaman with some unpronounceable cognomen. Once they had all been great friends, and there had been some talk of their becoming partners in the ownership of a team of bullocks, towards the purchase of which the Chinaman advanced some small sum; but afterwards the friends fell out, and Howard made some difficulty about giving back the money. The Chinaman bided his time, and some months after, when they had both left our service, he attacked Howard's wife, murdered her with his knife, at the same time mangling her little children most cruelly. Cowardice had prevented him from attacking the party who had really injured him, the husband of the unfortunate woman, but he wreaked his vengeance on the innocent and helpless. The murderer escaped unpunished; it is such a difficult matter to identify individuals of this nation; they bear to European eyes so striking a resemblance to each other, *I never knew one of our Chinese servants apart.*

As may be supposed, the Chinese are

regarded with very jealous eyes by the European working classes, for they naturally imagine that the great influx of Chinese emigrants is likely to lessen very considerably the price of labour.

The legislators of the colonies give another reason for their dislike to the arrival of such large numbers of enterprising Celestials. They say that they only come to our colonies to *accumulate* money, that they never *spend* any of their earnings in the land of their adoption, but save them carefully to take back to their own native land.

So strong is this feeling (of dislike to the Chinese emigrant) in the colony of Victoria, that the legislature levies a heavy tax—ten pounds a head, I believe—on each Chinaman setting his foot in the colony, besides calling on him to pay a certain sum monthly as a residential license—somewhat despotic measures, one would think, for a colony boasting such very free and liberal principles.

This is rather a wide digression from our station matters, so literally *revenons à nos moutons*. One gets somewhat tired of these said *moutons* after a short residence at a bush

station. They seem to afford the sole food for mind as well as body. All one's visitors (and gentlemen visitors are not such a rare phenomenon as might be supposed) seem to think of little else, and rarely broach any subject but those touching on ovine or bovine concerns; till one wonders how so much can be said about such useful but well-known creatures. Of the mysteries of a *cattle station* I know but little, for the few hundred head on our station had been suffered to run wild so long that they were hardly considered worth the trouble of collecting; but from what I have heard I believe a cattle station to be a much more easily conducted establishment than a sheep station, and one capable of being carried on at much less expense, returning more certain though perhaps more limited, profits. The hosts of shepherds and supernumeraries required on a sheep station are a constant drain on its owner's resources, and require the most vigilant superintendence, whereas where cattle alone have to be looked after, two or three active stockmen are sufficient to take charge in favourable situations of several thousand.

Where there are several cattle stations in the same neighbourhood, the stock-keepers assist each other alternately in the grand operations of mustering, branding, and collecting and selecting animals intended to be sent to market, either to be killed for the sake of the meat, or boiled down for their fat only; though, since the gold discovery, this latter practice has, I believe, been given up, the meat being now too valuable to be thrown away. When one hears of the hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle which, only a few years ago, were annually boiled down and their flesh absolutely wasted, while, at the same time, so many poor people in Ireland and in the highlands of Scotland were literally dying from starvation, one feels what a pity it was that no means were discovered to bring together the *wasted food* and the *wanting people*.

This is the sad view of the case—a semi-ludicrous one suggested itself to me, by my recollection of the old story of the hens who had a meeting to pass a resolution that they would no longer lay eggs at twopence a dozen. One wonders whether the sheep and

cattle would not also in time have come to a resolution not to get fat for the purpose of becoming eventually soap and candles, instead of fulfilling their natural destiny, and gracing some hospitable table in the shape of sirloins and saddles.

A strange, rough, half-civilized animal is the Australian stock-keeper, with no more resemblance to the quiet British herd-boy, than the more than half-wild cattle of Australia bear to their British cousins, the gentle and docile milch-cows of the old country.

More like a hunter than a herdsman, the Australian stock-keeper tracks his charge through the boundless forests, over the wide plains and rugged mountains of the Australian interior, and with the spirit of an Arab, has a hearty contempt for all who are engaged in the less exciting labour of agriculture, only exceeded by that which he entertains for his more natural brethren, whom he is pleased to denominate "crawling shepherds."

I need hardly say that all stock-keepers require to be first-rate riders. I fancy there is no rough riding in this country, perhaps

in any other, that requires the nerve, courage, and good horsemanship, demanded for running down cattle in the Australian mountains.

Ours was a particularly hilly run, indeed many of the descents were so precipitous, I could only compare them to some of the Alpine passes; and to see horses and their riders tearing down these precipices at a hard gallop, was really a fearful sight. The stockman's theory is, that wherever cattle rush in their fear and fury, a horseman may venture to follow, and it certainly is wonderful how few accidents do occur, in this wildest of all wild hunts.

I was once taking our usual evening ride with my husband, when we met the gentleman who had purchased our station, with one or two of his stockmen, returning from an unsuccessful search for a drove of cattle. We rode on together for a short distance, when suddenly we came on a small number *coloniciè* "mob," gently grazing under the trees. Directly they heard our horses' hoofs off they tore at full gallop, and after them at a tremendous pace went our horses. The

creature I was riding happened to be an old stock-horse, and though generally very quiet and easily guided, was possessed with a very ardent love of the chase, and was thoroughly determined that I should have the honour of turning or heading, as I believe it is termed, this wild mob—a feat I was by no means ambitious of performing, and it was with very great difficulty that I at last induced him to stop and leave the glory of such an achievement to others. When I had reined in my own horse, and could give my attention to my companions, I was perfectly horror-stricken, at the reckless way they dashed on over thickly wooded slopes, and down precipitous ravines, till in a few moments they were lost to sight. However, as I have before said, accidents really very rarely happen; both horse and rider are so well trained, and so thoroughly accustomed to this break-neck sort of work. When a wild mob has been driven up to the station all difficulty is by no means over; it is no easy matter to get them into the stock-yard. The arrival of wild cattle used to me to be quite an event, and not a

very pleasant one. The first sound that heralded their approach was the crack of the stockwhip, the report of which when wielded by skilful hands resembles the discharge of a gun; then came the tramp of hoofs which seemed almost to shake the earth, and the loud bellowing of the affrighted infuriated animals, with the voices of their pursuers distinctly heard in the tumult. The feat of driving them into the stock-yard accomplished, the noise was still far from subsiding, for the poor animals bemoan their fall and lament their lost liberty in bellowings loud and deep. At first after the arrival of a fresh drove, I used to find it impossible to sleep at night, the uproar they made was most distracting, but one gets accustomed to all continuous noises, so at last I ceased to hear, or at all events to notice the disturbance.

It must not be supposed that the occupations and avocations of the squatter are wholly confined to the management of his stock.

As I have before said, the greater number of those who live in districts where

agriculture is possible, put some small portion of their land under cultivation to supply grain for home consumption, so that they are also farmers on a small scale. In some places, too, where the soil is favourable enough for the growth of the vine, he has lately become a vine grower, and very respectable wines the Australian vintage produces, wanting in strength perhaps, but on this account all the better suited to the climate. It is only in some particular districts that the vine can be cultivated with success; but I have heard it frequently asserted, that where it does thrive, it will in time be a source of great wealth to the settler, and that he may perhaps eventually substitute the manufacture of wine for the growing of wool and tallow. At present, however, the culture of the vine for wine making purposes is not generally very well understood, but it is becoming the custom to employ German labourers in the vineyards, and I doubt not that in a few years Australian wines will be held in great repute. They strongly resemble in character the lighter Clarets, Burgundies, and some of

the Rhenish wines, and when mixed with soda water, form a very refreshing beverage in a warm climate. During our stay in the interior we contrived to make a few hogsheads of some very light wine, but our vines had been terribly neglected, and the supply of grapes they yielded was comparatively small. Besides, our private consumption of the latter was something very extravagant.

The greatest possible luxury in a warm climate is fruit ; we literally lived on it for two or three months. Such peaches, and apricots, as grew in our garden !

“ I ne’er had seen the like before, and ne’er may see again.”

The trees were standards of course, and attained a very large size, and the fruit that grew on them was most splendid—far surpassing, in size and flavour, any I have ever seen or tasted at home.

Some idea may be formed of the luxuriant abundance of the fruit they bore, from the following circumstance. My husband had spoken of his intention of sending a cart-load for sale to the neighbouring diggings at Bingera, and once, when taking my usual

evening walk in the garden, I asked him when he meant to despatch the fruit. Great was my astonishment when he told me he had already had some two thousand peaches and nectarines gathered that morning. I really could hardly believe it; familiar as I was with the trees I did not notice any diminution in the quantity of fruit still hanging on the branches. Unfortunately, however, they had been gathered when somewhat too ripe, and the heat of the weather united to the jumbling of the cart over the terrible Bingera road, destroyed the greater number before they reached their destined market. Had they arrived in good preservation, they would have realized some five and twenty or thirty pounds. The greater number of grapes we sent met with a similar fate, so we gave up this means of disposing of them, and converted the remainder into wine. Of the regular process of wine-making we were very ignorant, and had no presses or proper contrivances for extracting the juice, so we had recourse to a somewhat primitive method for effecting this purpose. We first tried squeezing with the hand, but this was such a very tedious

process, that we were soon tired, and began to reason that feet might be applied to this purpose with as much propriety and a good deal more efficacy.

The most *poetical* member of our party (which happened just then to be increased in number by the presence of one or two acquaintances), quoted in defence of this proceeding some lines of Macaulay's:—

“And in the vats of Luna,
This year the must shall foam,
Round the white feet of laughing girls
Whose sires have marched to Rome.”

while the most *practical* person present retired to pull off his boots and perform all necessary ablutions, &c., and clad in very light costume, he plunged boldly into the tub with a courage and devotion worthy of a better cause, commencing his somewhat arduous undertaking amid the laughter, instead of the cheers of the spectators.

Certainly, the work progressed much more quickly in this manner, the grapes being crushed as fast as they could be emptied into the vat.

The juice in the meantime was drawn off

and poured into other casks, a small quantity being allowed to ferment on the skins for the purpose of deepening the colour of the wine.

I believe the best wine is never adulterated with sugar or spirits, it is the pure juice of the grape, but we were obliged to put sugar to ours; the season had been very unfavourable for the vine, owing to the quantity of rain that had fallen, and the juice of the grapes was so thin and watery, it would not have kept without some help.

The must requires to be racked several times, that is, poured from cask to cask; any sediment that may have collected, of course being carefully rejected.

Some care must be taken while the necessary fermentation is going on, to keep the casks in a cool well-sheltered place, lest the wine should become sour, or what is called the vinous fermentation be superseded by the acetous, in which case the contents of the whole cask are entirely spoilt.

As we were obliged to convert our verandah into a cellar for the time, I was very glad when the fermentation was over,

for the fumes of the wine were really quite oppressive and very disagreeable. . On the whole, we were tolerably successful in our wine making—at least so we were told by a gentleman who had had some experience in the art, and who pronounced our wine the best he had tasted of that year's vintage. We began to drink it as soon as the active fermentation was over, as, from its slightly acidflavour, it formed a very pleasant, though perhaps not a very wholesome beverage; but to do wine justice, it ought to be kept at least a year, till the season when the sap rises again in the vine, at which time a second slight fermentation takes place, till the subsidence of which, the wine does not attain its proper body or flavour.

The best grapes for the manufature of Australian wines are the small “Black Cluster,” and the “Gouct.”

From the Muscatel grape, which grows very readily in sheltered situations, raisins are often prepared. Several modes are adopted for drying them, the simplest being to break the stalk of the branch, so as to prevent the sap from flowing to the fruit,

and to leave the cluster still hanging to the vine, till dried by the sun, and very delicious raisins may thus be procured. Other fruits are also dried and laid by for winter use. Peaches and apricots are taken when not entirely ripe, cut in two, threaded on a piece of string, and hung up in some warm sheltered spot, where they keep for a long time. Preserves, too, are manufactured to a great extent, and very useful they are, in enabling the housekeeper to form some little variety in the scanty or rather monotonous fare of the bush.

So the fruit season is a busy time in a bush household, though indeed at no season is idleness an admitted guest, and even ladies must not expect exemption from the universal law of labour.

The mistress of a bush household ought to be in all respects a notable housewife, with the knowledge how to perform all domestic offices, baking and churning, starching and ironing, &c., &c. I really mean this—it is not a mere *façon de parler*; not that it will be often necessary for a lady to do these things herself, but she should

be able to direct others, since it will most probably happen, that in the course of her experience of bush life, she will have at some time or other to trust to her own skill in such matters, and it is only with very great geniuses that the necessary cunning and sleight of hand comes by intuition. I speak from doleful experience. I used to hold the doctrine that nothing could be easier than getting a cookery book, and following the receipts it contained; but I found that besides having overlooked the little fact, that neither Dr. Kitchener nor M. Soyer contemplated the very limited cooking apparatus of a bush-kitchen, or the very limited resources of a bush-larder, I had not attached sufficient importance to the truth, that practice alone makes perfect; and alas! when I tried my hand at making a cake, or concocting a stew, I must confess it required the greatest stretch of good nature to pronounce my productions eatable.

Again, if I attempted another branch of the domestic arts, and tried to "get up" some of my muslin dresses, or my baby's robes,

I found it the work of many a weary hour to make them at all presentable, and there are many pleasanter occupations than ironing with the thermometer at 106°. The two women servants we had in our employment, I had hoped would have exempted me from the necessity of occupying myself so much about household matters; but unfortunately one of them had a long and dangerous illness soon after our arrival at our station, and in the meantime, to add to my numerous occupations, our little baby was born. After his arrival, I had indeed hardly an hour's leisure. Long before I ought to have thought of anything but rest, I had to be up and doing. The care of my baby by night and day devolved on me of course; not the mere superintendence which at such a time ladies generally find a sufficient tax on both mental and bodily powers, but such nursing as only falls to the lot of the poorest labourer's wife at home; few even of them are without some kind neighbour to help them at such time of need. Besides this, I had my little girl to look after (who at two and a half could not be supposed to

be very independent), and to superintend my servant-girl's operations in house and kitchen.

Think of this, young ladies for whom the romance of the primitive mode of bush-life has bright attractions.

It was easy enough for *me* to bear up under it all. I knew it was only for a few months, and I anticipated the amusement it would afford me in after-life, to talk over these adventures; but I confess I should not have much liked the notion of a permanent residence in the wilds of Australia. Those who like myself have little natural aptitude for household matters, must be terribly harassed by the continuance of these petty worrying cares, while those whose *forte* lies in that line, run no little danger of allowing every thought and faculty to become absorbed on their good housewifery, to the complete exclusion of more intellectual pursuits; so that when they have children to train up, it is out of their power to form their minds properly, or fit them for moving in anything like refined society.

Life in the bush is really a trial for any lady, and certainly the wife who fulfils all the domestic requirements of her station, and still retains her intellectual tastes and refinement, may fairly be termed a crown to her husband.

Not that I mean to assert that existence in the bush is wholly void of its pleasures, for, independently of the happiness always following duties well fulfilled, there is an intense appreciation of the hour or two's leisure, which those who have the whole day at their command can hardly understand.

The evening ride over hill and dale, the strolls by the banks of the river, the perusal of some new book—which like angels' visits, come few and far between — are indeed sources of very great enjoyment; and though, as I have before said, I must plead guilty to having had occasional longings for our home in fair Perthshire, yet had the first home of my married life been our wild bush station, I can believe I might have been happy in it, and even become in time a notable house-wife. So I would not wish by my cautions to deter any young lady from undertaking

the multifarious duties of a settler's wife, but it is better she should not be ignorant of them. She ought to bear in mind that hers should be in the superlative degree a cheerful easy temper, a brave steadfast heart, an active willing hand, and a more than ordinary degree of affection for the one for whom she renounces home and country, and all former ties; for frequent must be the exile's yearning for the friends and scenes of her childhood, and experience alone can teach how bitter a thing it is to be a stranger in a strange land.

CHAPTER XI.

The Blacks' camp—Frequent change of quarters—*Patois* spoken by them—Their aversion to labour—Love of hunting—Varieties of game—Arts of the chasc—Their modes of cooking—Skin cloaks—The Bunya-bunya or Australian bread-fruit—Native honey—Stingless bees—Native toilette—A ball *à la Spurgeon*—Corroborees and Boroes.

"Look now abroad ! Another race has filled
Those populous borders—wide the wood recedes,
And towns shoot up and fertile realms are filled."

Bryant.

ONE of the most interesting features of the landscape in the vicinity of our station was an encampment of aborigines, about a quarter of a mile from our cottage. When we first arrived it consisted only of some eight or ten individuals, men, women, and children, who belonged to that neighbourhood, or to use their own phrase looked on Keera as their *tourai*, the little domain which belonged to them and they to it ; but no sooner did the news of our coming spread among the neighbouring tribes or families than the size of the encampment greatly

increased, and during the whole of our residence we had some thirty or forty of these poor creatures encamped in our immediate neighbourhood. My husband had always taken a great interest in them, and been perhaps a little too liberal to them, so directly they heard of his return they flocked to see him, and remained about the station until we left—a very lengthened residence; for they have in general a great dislike to remain so long in one place—a dislike partly arising, no doubt, from the game in the neighbourhood becoming quickly exhausted, but also founded on some superstitious reason which we could never understand. Even while they remained in our paddock they would change the site of their little bark huts or *guneyahs* every eight or ten days, sometimes encamping on one side of the creek, sometimes on the other, and sometimes not moving above twenty or thirty yards from their former situation, but always making some move, however slight. I was naturally very anxious to learn all I could about this strange race, and their encampment was a source of great interest to me. It used to be a very favourite resort

of ours in the evenings, and my husband would get into conversation with some of the more sociable individuals, and try to extract from them all the information likely to interest me, but they were very chary in communicating anything touching their ways and customs.

Nor is it quite easy to understand them, for although all those I ever came in contact with spoke a sort of English, it is so much of a jargon, consisting principally of a sort of prison slang not bearing much resemblance to the pure vernacular, that one requires to become familiar with it before it conveys much meaning for ears uninstructed. The original concocters of this singular gibberish, the universal medium of intercourse between Europeans and the aborigines, appear to have anticipated Mrs. Plornish's style of conversing with Calvallo (in Dickens's "Little Dorrit")—the ludicrous result of which is, that the speakers on both sides are under the impression that the principal terms made use of are peculiar to the language of the other, whereas in reality they belong to neither, nor to any known language whatever.

The actual native language, as spoken among themselves, appeared to me rather musical and pretty, from the frequent use of single and double vowels at the termination of the words.

They have no written alphabet, nor indeed any means of recording past events. The nearest approach to hieroglyphics in use among them are the rude carvings on trees in the vicinity of their burial places.

I am afraid it has been a long acknowledged fact that the natives of Australia occupy almost the lowest place among the human race. I say afraid, for I really took a great interest in our black acquaintances—I had almost written friends—and they in turn were very fond of us, even condescending occasionally to work for us—a great stretch of good feeling, for they are by nature very lazy. They seem to hold to the opinion that the *dolce far niente* constitutes the summit of earthly happiness, and that nothing can really repay them for performing any labour beyond that necessary to procure them enough game to enable them to exist from day to day. They know

quite well that there is no station in the interior where their services would not be acceptable and amply remunerated in clothes, food, and money, yet it is very rarely that they can be induced to work at all steadily, though when an occasional industrious fit seizes them they make good shepherds and stock-keepers.

For some months during our residence in the bush my husband had three or four of his flocks tended by blacks, another served as a stock-keeper, and another as a sort of groom; while others, who were too idle to undertake any fixed employment, would come and work occasionally in the garden or vineyard, expecting merely food for their services.

But they all looked on working for us as a personal favour, and gave us to understand as much, for it was only when my husband was unable to get European servants that he could induce them to shepherd for him; even then they always stipulated that in a certain number of days, weeks, or at the outside, "moons," he would get "white fellow" to relieve them of their uncongenial

occupation. No doubt they like the white man's food well enough, yet they prefer trusting for their subsistence to the precarious gains of a hunter, rather than to the weekly "ration cart" of an employer.

Not that they are without a relish for beef and mutton, especially when taken or killed by themselves, but still they retain a partiality for their native delicacies, such as the flesh of the kangaroo, opossum, emu, native turkey, and wild duck, which constitute the principal variety of game in the forests and plains of Australia. They show great skill in all the arts of the chase; indeed their instincts, as in the case of all savage races, are wonderfully strong and acute. To see them find out and follow up the trail of their game is really a marvellous proof of the sort of animal sagacity with which they are gifted. The kangaroo they generally catch in nets, into which the animal is hunted, by aid of the mongrel curs which swarm at every bush encampment; though occasionally a more than usually expert hunter will stalk one much as sportsmen stalk the deer in our country, the "waddy" or spear

generally taking the place of the gun or rifle; although many of the more civilized natives are by no means unskilful in the use of the latter, when they can obtain the loan of them from the Europeans. But the more usual plan adopted by the native to procure Australian venison is either to lay a net across the trail of a single animal, or for a whole tribe, aided by the before-mentioned mongrel dogs, to form a cordon round a certain tract of country until the game is driven into the nets, which have been stretched across a narrow corner or some other convenient situation. These nets are the handiwork of the "gins," as the native women are called, and are generally made of the fibres of the "corryjong" tree, or of the bulrush and "wongul" roots. These fibres are separated by maceration, and afterwards twisted together. The netting needle they use is a piece of hard smooth wood, and the string is wound round it. They work without a mesh, yet the regularity of the loops is quite astonishing.

A more common article of food among the natives than the flesh of the kangaroo

is that of the opossum. This little animal they obtain in a very curious manner. The hunter selects some tree which he imagines likely to be "possum's" abiding place, and examines the bark carefully to see if there are any fresh marks of claws, indicating that one has recently gone "up a gum tree." This fact ascertained, he makes preparations for his ascent.

As I think I have before remarked, it is one peculiarity of the full grown trees of Australia that they generally reach an immense height, frequently forty or fifty feet, before putting forth any branches, so that to the most practised of schoolboys the ascent would seem an utter impossibility. Not so, however, to the expert savage—with his stone hatchet he cuts notches in the bark for his toes, and quickly runs up the highest trees; or he makes a sort of belt or ring from some strong creeper, passes it round the trunk of the tree to be ascended and his own body, and by the alternate action of his hands and toes (which latter form the point of the angle his body makes with the tree); he contrives to jerk himself

up to a great height, after a fashion calculated to excite the admiration of an acrobat or slack rope dancer.

The tree ascended, he strikes one or two of the hollow decayed branches, till he ascertains by hearing its movements in which of them his quarry has taken refuge. Soon he cuts into his retreat with his hatchet, seizes his victim by the tail, drags it out in spite of its most piteous cries and lamentations, and puts an end to its complainings and its existence.

The common opossum is rather a pretty looking little creature, about the size of a rabbit, but with short ears and a fine bushy tail. There is another variety called the ring-tailed opossum, from the power it has of curling its long slender tail round branches and holding on by it.

It is smaller than the common species, but of the same dark gray colour, and with the same bright black eyes. I was anxious to taste this Australian delicacy, and prevailed on one of our black friends to get me one. I had it stewed, after soaking it in salt and water all night, to take away the

astringent flavour which its diet of gum leaves imparts to it, and really it made a very palatable dish; the flesh is very brown, but not unlike that of a rabbit in taste. There is another great delicacy of the aboriginal bill of fare, which I certainly never qualified myself to pass an opinion on, but which I have heard some gentlemen commend greatly. I allude to a large white grub which lives in trees, frequenting particularly the swamp oak and apple tree, and is regarded as a special *bonne bouche* by the natives. Snakes, too, are much esteemed by them, but they will only eat those which they have killed themselves, for the snake when mortally wounded has a curious habit of biting itself, and its poison, though only *fatal* when acting on the blood, still has the effect, the blacks imagine, of rendering any flesh unwholesome; so when they kill these creatures with the further intention of eating them, they take care, by knocking them first on their head, to prevent their having the opportunity of inflicting any wound on themselves.

The Iguana, too, finds great favour in

native eyes, as also do wild fowl of all descriptions. The wingless Emu, and the bustard or wild turkey, their noblest specimens of feathered game, are very shy and difficult of approach. The natives generally steal up to them under the cover of a bush, and when near enough strike them with boomerang, waddy, or spear.

I have heard, too, of another mode by which they entrap the latter of these birds. They make a noose at the end of a long string and secure some small bird in it. The turkey is attracted to it, and the hunter who is hidden behind a bush and still retains one end of the string, no sooner sees his game in his power than by twisting and pulling it judiciously, he manages to secure his prey. Smaller birds, such as the wood-pigeon and quail, are caught by means of snares. Waterfowl they have, I believe, many ways of entrapping. Sometimes, I have heard, they keep under water breathing through a reed, and draw down the ducks floating above, or hide behind bushes on the bank of the stream, and with their boomerangs and waddies manage to secure the fattest of the flock.

They are very expert also in fishing, every native is almost amphibious, and sometimes they dive under water armed with a light spear, feel in the holes for a fish and transfix it. Other tribes depend principally on the use of their nets. The rivers contain a very fair supply of fish. In the Western waters the best of these is a sort of fresh water cod, very much resembling in flavour its salt water congener. It attains a large size. At our station it was no unusual thing to catch one weighing eight-and-twenty or thirty pounds.

There is another smaller fish not unlike the perch in flavour, and another known as the Jew fish or Cat fish, so called from the antennæ or feelers which surround its mouth, bearing some sort of resemblance to a beard or to cats' whiskers. Besides these three species there are others whose names I do not know, and abundance of a small crawfish or prawn; so that, except in particular seasons of drought or flood, the river furnishes the natives with a tolerable supply of food.

Their mode of cooking is very primitive: each family has a small fire burning in front

of its guneyah, which it is the business of the "gin" to keep alight; the game is cast with little preparation on the embers, and thus roasted. In the case of the kangaroo or opossum, the skin is generally carefully taken off and pegged out on a little board to dry.

When a sufficient number of skins have been collected they are sewn together by the women, whose needles are wooden skewers, and their thread the sinews of some animal, or the fibres of some plant, and thus are formed the skin cloaks, the only native garment of the Australian black.

Fish and game, however, though forming the *pièces de resistance* at the native table, are by no means the only species of food to be obtained in the Australian forests. Roots of various kinds are to be met with everywhere, and in some parts the fruit of the trees form the chief sustenance of the natives. In the Northern districts there is a species of pine, the *Araucaria Bidwellii*, also known as the Bunya-bunya, or native *bread fruit*, which, every alternate year, produces a nut not unlike the chestnut, which is really the staff of life to the inhabitants of those

regions, who live upon it entirely during several months of the year, but are not, I believe, sufficiently provident to store it for the remainder. It is however, of so great use to them, that Government has very properly given orders that in the Bunya Districts these trees are on no account to be felled for any purpose. There is also a species of grass growing in some districts known to the learned as the *Panicum Lævonide*, the seeds of which the natives gather and make into cakes.

Indeed, I do not think it can with justice be said that there is any scarcity of food for the native inhabitants of Australia, especially considering their greatly diminished and annually diminishing numbers. But they have very strict regulations, sump-tuary laws I suppose we may call them, regulating the rights of individuals to partake of all the delicacies I have been describing. Children up to ten years of age may eat anything, and so may old people, but young men and girls are prohibited from partaking of various kinds of game, such as the crane, the wallabi, the large kanga-

roo, the snake, and some others. There is one really delicious concomitant of bush fare which all may enjoy alike, however; I allude to the wild honey, which is really very nice. I used to think it superior to that made by the European bee. It is quite liquid, and has a slight acidity which I thought very pleasant. The mode in which the natives collect it is rather curious. When they see a native bee returning home laden with spoil, they catch the tiny insect, which is stingless, and bears more resemblance to a fly than a bee, and fasten a small piece of white down to its wing, then let it go and watch its flight; having ascertained the tree in which it has its home, they ascend it as before described and carry off its nest with its sweet spoils. Native honey being generally found deposited in decayed branches of trees, it becomes so mixed with the bark and fragments of the wood by the process of cutting it out, that it requires to be carefully strained before it is fit for table. The native, however, is by no means particular, and devours as eagerly as a child the *olla podrida* which he terms

a sugar bag. I am afraid it is not often his poor gin comes in for any of his treasure, but she frequently makes exploring excursions, and secures some on her own account. In some districts, too, a kind of manna is found, which is also much esteemed by the aborigines, and where the *Wattle** tree grows they eat the gum, which it yields very abundantly.

I am not aware that there is any description of grain indigenous in any of the colonies (unless the grass I have before mentioned can be considered as one); and this circumstance, as has been before remarked, may partly account for the roving unsettled habits of the natives, who have never had the inducement to remain stationary, which would have arisen had they followed any agricultural pursuits.

With regard to the native toilette: in the wild districts, I believe it is in the lightest possible style, every description of garment being in general dispensed with, excepting in cold or wet weather, when the "skin cloak" answers all requirements. But in more civilized

* *Acacia Mollissima*.

regions, some sort of clothing is always worn. Frequently, instead of the fur rug a blanket of some bright colour, scarlet being held in especial favour, is thrown over their shoulders, mantle fashion, and reaches almost to the ground. This forms rather a picturesque costume, and "scarlet," as we all know, "looks well through the trees." A less becoming mode of dress is that of adopting some of the cast-off garments of the settler, and most queer-looking figures many of the natives present when thus arrayed, for they rarely don the whole costume. The possessor of a great coat, for instance, would think his toilette perfect, or the still more fortunate owner of a pair of inexpressibles and a bright coloured waistcoat would present himself before you with a smile of the proudest satisfaction. Nor are light muslin or barège dresses made in the last European fashion more becoming to the women, who are nevertheless much delighted with any article of old finery that they can procure.

The men generally contrive to monopolize all the native means of adornment. On all grand occasions they decorate themselves

with the feathers of the cockatoo, emu, swan, &c., and place in their hair the teeth of the kangaroo and the claws of birds, adorning themselves also with belts and necklaces made of small pieces of reed strung together. They also bedaub themselves with a species of red and yellow ochre, and admire one another greatly when thus decorated. I remember on one occasion I had my colour box with me when at their camp; their delight in examining the different paints was very great, and one old man (known among them as "King Sandy" from being the acknowledged head of their tribe) was made especially happy by my husband executing some remarkable hieroglyphics in bright tint on his face and forehead. I soon made him desist, however, for there was something melancholy in seeing the childish eagerness with which this really fine looking old savage submitted or rather petitioned to be thus bedaubed. The custom of tattooing, so much in favour among the New Zealanders, is not practised by the Australian natives, though they have a somewhat similar one of cutting themselves on the chest and shoul-

ders with sharp stones on attaining the age of twelve or fourteen; the wounds thus inflicted produce lasting cicatrices or raised scars, which are looked on as great personal ornaments.

A very curious sight is a corroboree or native dance, in which the men alone take part. One of these Australian realizations of Mr. Spurgeon's ideas of what a ball should be, was held in our paddock during our stay in the interior, and though the "at home" was not very largely attended, as it was the only one I was likely to have an opportunity of witnessing, I walked down with my husband and looked on at a respectful distance. It was really a curious sight, those wild looking figures seen in the dark night by the red glow of the fires, performing all sorts of strange evolutions, their naturally savage appearance rendered still more striking by the streaks of red and white clay with which they were bedaubed, and the quantities of feathers and down with which they had covered their hair. The women sat round in an admiring circle, chanting in chorus a

sort of wild recitation, all the singers beating time, and admirable time too, with their "paddy melon" sticks on a sort of a drum made by a fold of their opossum skin cloaks, which was stretched between their knees, the monotony of the never-ending air being relieved by the shoutings and howlings of the dancers. It really hardly occurred to me that they were human beings, the whole picture in the lurid glare of their torches seemed so unreal, I could only compare it to a scene of diablerie from *Der Freischütz* or *Faust*. The continuation of sounds produced by this primitive orchestra was rarely loud enough to be disagreeable, and was not wanting in a sort of musical power well suited to the scene. Some experienced elder of the band marked the time by knocking together two sticks—not exactly after the fashion of M. Jullien, however, inasmuch as he only uses one.

I do not think that the meaning of these "Corroborees" has ever been exactly understood. I fancy myself that they are looked on partly as superstitious observances proper to be performed at certain seasons of the

year, and during certain phases of the moon. There are other meetings they hold, known in our part of the country as "Boroes," which they acknowledge are for the purpose of celebrating some superstitious rites practised when their youth arrive at years of manhood, but they are particularly jealous of the presence of Europeans at these rites, and I never met with any one who had witnessed their celebration. The tribes assemble from great distances to be present at these gatherings, and as the call to a "boro" is as urgent and imperative as was that of the fiery cross in days of yore, it is, as may be imagined, a sound of fear to a poor squatter who has three or four of his flocks in the hands of native shepherds.



CHAPTER XII.

Native superstitions—A burial place—Different modes of disposing of the dead—Notions of a future state—Condition of their women—A matrimonial dispute—Native children—Infanticide—Half-castes—Nurses and wet-nurses—“Black Charlie”—An awkward predicament—A sad fate—Both sides of the question—Calling things by right names.

THOUGH the natives of Australia have many superstitions, as may be gathered from what I have related in the last chapter, and are observant of some few rites and ceremonies, I think they can hardly be said to have any regular creed beyond the belief in the existence of evil spirits, of whom they are much afraid, and from the ill effects of whose influence they seem to imagine that fire affords them the best protection; for this reason, they rarely move from their camp even by day-time without carrying a fire-stick with them, and at night nothing

would induce them to stir without such a talisman.

They have a great dislike to hear death spoken of, or the names of their deceased friends mentioned. Not far from our station was one of their burial places, and as I was anxious to visit it, after one or two ineffectual attempts to find it by ourselves, we repaired to our friend "King Sandy," and asked him to direct us to the spot. He shuddered and literally turned *pale* when we broached the subject, and when we pressed it said in a low tone: "No, no, too much dibil, dibil, sit down there." On my husband's questioning him as to which of his former acquaintances were interred there, he at first refused to reply, and when at last induced to mention their names, did so in a whisper, scarcely above his breath, at the same time looking round fearfully, as though he expected to see some dark form hovering near him.

We contrived at last with no little difficulty to find among the tribe one more valiant than the rest, to conduct us to the burial ground. We followed him for about

half a mile, when he stopped abruptly, pointed with his hand to a very tall tree, some few yards off, and darted away like an arrow, unwilling to linger near the terrible spot. We walked on to the place indicated, and under the spreading branches of a monster cypress pine, the first of these graves met our view. It was a large mound made of gravel, surrounded and supported by branches of trees evidently lately placed there, and bore the appearance of being tended with no little care; so that it would appear that, however much they may dislike to name the dead or visit their last abodes, they do not allow the tombs of their friends to suffer from their neglect. There were three or four similar mounds within sight, and the trunks of the surrounding trees were carved with the hieroglyphics to which I have before alluded; rude representations of weapons, such as the boomerang, waddy, &c., and others supposed to delineate opossums and other kinds of game. I could not but remark the fitness with which they had chosen the site of their cemetery, under the shadow of the gray iron

bark, and the sombre cypress pine—a spot that nature seemed to have planted for such a purpose.

It must not be supposed, however, that it is a universal practice among the aborigines to bury their dead. Some of the tribes in the Northern districts expose their dead on trees, or on wooden stages erected for that purpose. Others, I have heard, burn their corpses and collect the ashes, which they carry about with them; while it is said some even take the entire bodies of their deceased friends, after they have undergone some rude process of mummification.

Cannibalism, though not frequently practised, is by no means unknown among them, as many well authenticated stories would prove. When indulged in, it is said to be a proof either of great enmity or intense love and admiration of the deceased. A very general custom, I have heard, once prevailed among them of anointing themselves with the fat of their deceased foes, their notion being that they thus communicated to themselves a portion of the skill and valour which had belonged to the deceased.

Their notions regarding a future state appear to be very vague and unformed, the general reply to any question on the subject being, "How me know?" or "Me none able to tell;" but some enunciate the somewhat startling theory, "Me jump up white fellow."

I have heard an anecdote of some poor creature who was to expiate on the gallows a murder he had committed, and his last words previous to execution were, "Very good, me jump up white fellow; plenty six-pence then." There are traditions that the belief in this superstition has saved the life of more than one European, who was believed to be the embodied spirit of one of the departed members of a tribe. Their marriage ceremonies are not formal; the old story used to be, that when a black fellow wanted a wife, he lay in wait for some girl of a neighbouring tribe, pounced upon her, and dragged her off to his quarters. I do not know that such summary proceedings are always practised, but there are generally blows given and received on both sides, "Plenty spear and boomerang," before the contract is concluded. The fate of these poor wives or

"gins," as they are called, is a very hard one, and if the consideration in which women are held among a nation is, as some gallant writer has suggested, a fair test of the civilization of that people, then I think the Australian aboriginal would sink very low indeed in the scale of civilized humanity. The gin is little else but the slave and beast of burden of her lord. All the hard work falls to her share: collecting wood for firing, gathering and preparing roots for the family consumption, carrying the children (of course), and also all the household goods when the family is on the march, are the lifelong and unaided tasks of the poor gin. Then, when any dissensions arise—or, as is now too often the case, when the men get intoxicated—the poor gins come very badly off; not unfrequently they are killed in some domestic feud, and often have fearful wounds inflicted on them by their lords and masters. I remember once being very much startled by one of the native women rushing into my bedroom, trembling with fear, bleeding from a wound on the head, and hardly able to speak, taking refuge under the bed. My

husband, who was fortunately in the room, at last succeeded in drawing from her that her owner in a fit of jealousy had inflicted this blow on her, and threatened to kill her, and that there was a great fight going on between him and her friends and relations. On hearing this, my husband armed himself with his stockwhip, and stowing her away in a spare closet, went out (in spite of my entreaties) to terminate the fray. On arriving at the scene of combat he found spears and boomerangs were being flung about in great numbers, but somewhat imprudently disregarding these weapons, he rushed into the middle of the combatants with his formidable stockwhip, and cutting right and left soon cooled the courage of the most valiant, who intimated that they had had enough fighting, and were willing to keep the peace. Still, the poor frightened gin would not leave our cottage that night, and indeed returned with great reluctance to her camp on the following morning. She was the Hebe of the tribe, and considered a great beauty, and frequent were the quarrels of which she was the cause; though in what her beauty con-

sisted I could never discover, unless it was in her superior dimensions, as she was decidedly the fattest of her tribe.

The number of children in a tribe is generally very small and disproportionate to its numbers, so that there really is every probability, in the course of a few more generations, of the race becoming extinct.

This decrease in the native population may partly be accounted for by the fact of the practice of infanticide being still common among them. It is still a frequent custom to destroy all infants born before the former child has attained the age of three or four years, until which time it is considered too young to take care of itself, or to perform the journeys undertaken by its tribe. Half-castes, too, are almost invariably destroyed, but to such of their children as they allow to grow up, the parents are generally very indulgent. I have also been told, that the native women make kind and careful nurses to European children, but I never had sufficient confidence to trust them with my baby out of my own sight, though I used to get one of the young girls to carry him for me when I went out for a stroll, or to walk up

and down the verandah with him while I sat at work; and very glad I was of such assistance, for nursing in hot weather is a somewhat fatiguing business. Of course there were one or two little processes, the first being a bath in the river, which I made my sable attendant go through before I allowed her to touch my wee one, but these observances duly performed and the frock donned, which I kept for her use on such occasions, she really made a useful elfin-like little nurse. We also occasionally contrived to induce two of the native women to wash for us, but all services, though duly paid for, they looked on as so many favours conferred, and it is as I have before said very difficult to retain a native in your service, indeed, though they may have been months or years with you, you can never be sure of the day or the hour that they may not take to the woods and disappear.

Occasional examples of striking fidelity may, however, in rare instances, be met with. My husband in former days, when living in the far North-West, and waging a perpetual guerilla warfare with the wild tribes by whom he was surrounded, had one

black fellow in his employment, whose courage, fidelity, and attachment to him far surpassed anything of the kind that he had ever met with among any of the Europeans in his service. On one occasion, when he could get no one else to accompany him to a station which had been attacked by aborigines and abandoned by the terrified shepherds, after several of their fellow-servants had been killed, and a large number of sheep driven away, "Black Charlie" volunteered his services, and he and his master garrisoned the deserted hut, which they held in the midst of hostile tribes (their nearest European neighbour being sixty miles off), until reinforcements arrived, which enabled them to re-establish the station and to save a quantity of wool which had been abandoned in the first panic. Poor Charlie! it makes me melancholy to write of him, for he came to an untimely end!

He, and his master, and a European servant were once suddenly surprised at their midday camp by a large tribe of natives, numbering a couple of hundred at least. They had lain in ambush and surrounded

this small party, which they did not care to attack till they had seen them dismount and lay down their arms in preparation for a meal; then they formed a cordon round them, and with hideous yells began to close in on their intended victims. Their horses were unsaddled, and it required no little nerve deliberately at such a moment to adjust girth and bridle, and unfasten the hobbles which confined their feet. Doing so, however, and keeping a firm bold bearing to the enemy during the process, was their only chance of safety. My husband walked up to his horse, which fortunately allowed itself to be caught, saddled and mounted it, having previously directed his companions to do the same. All this time the circle of savages was closing in around them, and it was no great wonder that poor Charlie lost his presence of mind and omitted, as it was afterwards discovered he must have done, to unhobble his horse. The animal he rode had strayed in a different direction from the others, and Charlie had cleared the terrible cordon in search of it long before my husband had left the camp, so that when my husband,

after some hair-breadth escapes from the weapons flung at him from all sides, and after hazarding his life by dismounting when once on the saddle to secure a note-book which contained some valuable information, at last succeeded in breaking the belt of foes which girdled him round, got out of spear's throw and drew his rein to look round for his companions, it excited little alarm in his mind to find Charlie absent, for he imagined he had taken some other road to the station, as he had been seen in comparative safety beyond the limits of the circle. Rejoining his European servant, who had cleared the ring some time before, they made a *détour* to see if they could discover anything of Charlie, but not finding him they hastened to the head station, some twenty miles distant, hoping to find him there. He not having arrived, however, my husband procured fresh horses and attendants, and rode back to look for him, but no traces of him could they discover. My husband subsequently took another black to the spot where Charlie had last been seen, and he pointed out marks on the ground from which he inferred that Charlie had caught and

mounted his horse, but neglected to unhobble it, for there were marks of a horse's fore feet evidently chained together. Eventually the animal appeared to have fallen with its rider, who then took to his heels, but his enemies alas! had evidently overtaken him and killed him. No more authentic particulars were ever heard of his fate, but, poor fellow ! he could expect no mercy at the hands of his foes. A sad loss he was to his master, who had every reason to mourn his untimely death, for besides the courage and fidelity he had always displayed, the instincts of a savage are of the greatest use and protection in savage warfare.

There has often been a great deal said against this guerilla warfare with the blacks, and no doubt at times and in certain districts horrible atrocities have been committed against them, which have brought well merited punishment on the heads of the perpetrators; but it must be remembered these atrocities are not confined to one side, and it is generally the aborigines who commence the warfare by spearing some unfortunate shepherd or stock-keeper, dispersing

and driving off his sheep and cattle, thus drawing down on their heads the vengeance of the injured settler. If it be argued that we have no right to any portion of their land, this principle, if admitted anywhere, must for consistency's sake be carried out everywhere. Is there a foot of ground in the colony to which we have any right but that of the strong arm? The land on which Sydney itself is built, how did it become ours? Let our restitution be complete, let the remaining representative of the Sydney tribe (a poor old cripple who haunts the fashionable drive in the environs of the city) be installed in due state in Government House, and then, and not till then, can the squatter with any consistency be called on to give up the homestead he has formed with so much labour and at so much peril.

If the interests of humanity and the cause of civilization and progress justified our taking possession of one acre of the soil, these justifications exist still, and the adventurous explorers and settlers of the present day are no more to be condemned than were those of a past generation.

But, instead of condemning either, does it not rather seem that it was the especial hand of Providence which, when the old world was fast becoming too limited in space for its rapidly increasing population, discovered to her over-crowded children this fair new land where the hard-working emigrant from the mother country might find a new field for his labours, and reap in due time an abundant harvest?

That the claims of the aboriginal inhabitants should be entirely disregarded, is far from what I mean to assert. As much care as possible should be taken to interfere as little as may be with their pursuits. Their hunting grounds, except in the vicinity of large towns, have been by no means destroyed by our settlements; the game may be somewhat scarcer than formerly, but there is still enough and to spare; and were it not so, labour, the primeval sentence pronounced on our first parents, would always procure them the necessities of life in abundance.

Indeed, any one who knows anything of the squatter's condition will readily under-

stand how important it is to his interest to cultivate a good understanding with the surrounding tribes. This is almost invariably the first attempt and always the earnest desire of the new settler. But it must be remembered, he is far beyond the reach of the protection of the laws, he depends solely on his own strong arm to defend both life and property, and if he finds his best endeavours at conciliation prove vain—if he sees his home-stead destroyed, his flocks dispersed, his servants cruelly murdered, and feels that there is no court of justice to appeal to, that Government is powerless to help him—then it would be hard indeed to say that he must look calmly on at all this devastation, and not avail himself of the best means he may possess of defending life and property, and preventing the recurrence of such atrocities.

Every person of right feeling, however, will and does most deeply deplore the necessity of using any severe measures, and strives as far as lies in his power to prevent all occasion for employing them. But to call the conflicts which occasionally take

place with the aborigines by the name of *murder* is simply absurd, unless all acts of defence, not to speak of warfare, are to be invariably so termed when attended with loss of life. The numbers are generally ten to one against the Europeans, and their foes are not destitute of other advantages afforded by their perfect knowledge of the surrounding country; so that this border warfare is as fair legitimate fighting as may be, only as it concerns the lives and properties of a few unknown individuals instead of those of powerful nations, and as the loss of life it entails is as units to thousands, so it is that those concerned in it are so much blamed and cavilled at by those who are either ignorant of the fact, or desirous of making capital by the enunciation of absurdly exaggerated philanthropical sentiments.

I hardly like to end in this way my chapter on the blacks, for I would not seem guilty of disregarding their claims on our kindness or consideration, but I have so often been provoked at the nonsense talked by those who know nothing about the

matter, and can have very little right to form an opinion on the subject.

For my own part, though daring to hold and confess to such apparently cruel sentiments as I have expressed, I fancy there are very few who ever felt more kindly towards the natives than I did. Indeed, to tell the truth, I felt more regret in bidding adieu to our dark friends at the black encampment, than in parting with the greater number of persons and things whom we left behind in New South Wales.

CHAPTER XIII.

Starting for a day of kangaroo hunting—A *contretemps*—Advantages of a thick skull—The Tea tree—Table land—Kangaroos in sight—An unsuccessful burst—An “Old Man”—A formidable weapon—The Dingo—A theory—The kangaroo rat—The Bandicoot—The Rock Wallaby—River fishing—The *Platypus Ornithorynchus Paradoxus*—The Bunyip—A flood—Flies and mosquitoes—Varieties of blight—Ophthalmia—Fifty miles from a doctor—Visitors—Neighbours—Homeward ho!

“A thousand suns may stream on thee,
A thousand moons may quiver,
But not by thee my steps shall be
For ever and for ever.”

Tennyson.

I WAS very desirous to be present at a kangaroo hunt before leaving the Bush. Kangaroos were rather scarce in the immediate vicinity of our station, and I had never seen one during our evening rides, so at last we fixed on a day for our expedition to their favourite haunts on the Table ground,

some fifteen or eighteen miles from our cottage. An early start was of course desirable, so one fine March morning before sunrise we were all in our saddles ready for our expedition, having partaken of a cup of coffee, but preferring to defer breakfast till we should reach our hunting ground.

Our party consisted of my husband and myself, a young acquaintance who was living with us, a European servant, and an aboriginal (on whose good horsemanship and skill as a guide we greatly depended); last but not least were two magnificent hounds, to run down our game. The regular kangaroo hound is really a very fine animal, something between the stag-hound and the greyhound, combining the spirit and strength of the former with the swiftness of the latter. In colour they are generally a light brown or tan, sometimes black, and rarely brindled. Some of them are smooth haired and others rough, the latter being the most esteemed.

When we were all assembled, a fair division was made of the breakfast material, so that each horse might only have its due

share of extra weight to carry; to one were given the quart and pint pots, to another the tea and sugar, and to a third the beef and damper, for we had wisely resolved not to rely on the products of our chase, for our morning or midday meal. All preparations at length concluded we set off at a gentle pace, my husband and I in advance; we had hardly cleared our fences, however, when hearing a slight confusion behind us, we looked back, and saw our poor aboriginal attendant actually under his horse's feet. He had mounted a very vicious animal that had hardly ever been ridden before, and this is the way it had served him. I really think a European would have been killed by the accident, for the creature after it had thrown him literally danced on his head, but the thickness of a black fellow's skull is quite proverbial, and though stunned for a moment, he soon recovered himself, remounted the animal and rode on a long way with us; he was obliged to turn back, however, at the end of some five or six miles, and from his departure our hopes of being able to capture a kangaroo were much

damped, as we had quite depended on him to be in at the death, a feat to which I did not feel myself at all equal, nor should I have liked my husband to leave me behind in the chase. However, as I might not have another opportunity of ever seeing a kangaroo in its native forests, and as the day was very fine and pleasant, we determined to continue our ride, and trust to our own prowess. The road, or rather track, we were following led us through beautiful country; it ran now on one side, now on the other of a rapid little stream called the "Tea tree" Creek, from the number of trees or rather shrubs known by this name which fringe its banks. The "Tea tree" is rather a pretty shrub, something like a stunted cypress; whence its appellation is derived I could never learn. After crossing this creek six and twenty times, we arrived at a very steep ascent, which we had to surmount before reaching the table land, the rocky heights of which are favourite haunts of the kangaroos. This table land is the commencement of the New England districts, and abounds in the bogs and marshes which are

the characteristics of that part of New England which I had the opportunity of making acquaintance with. After riding some little distance without seeing anything of the creatures we sought, we determined to halt for breakfast before advancing any farther. Accordingly we dismounted, lighted a fire and boiled our tea, bush fashion, enjoying it not a little after our long ride, and rendering ample justice to the homely beef and damper. When rested and refreshed we remounted our horses, and after riding a little farther were rewarded by coming on two large kangaroos browsing quite close to the track we were following. I caught sight of one first, and forgetting for a moment where we were and what we were in search of, I exclaimed "Look at those deer," so much did they resemble, even at a very short distance, the graceful inhabitants of our parks. Their first movements, however, dispelled the illusion, as they bounded high in the air and alighted some ten or twelve feet in advance, repeating this leap with wonderful rapidity and yet with the greatest apparent ease to themselves, con-

triving soon to distance our horses, though urged to the greatest speed with which it was at all safe to traverse that rocky ground. Indeed, I think for the time we all forgot the rocks and steep descents, at least I can answer for myself, the most cowardly of the party, so anxious was I to witness the capture of one of these creatures, but alas! we soon lost sight of them, and turned back somewhat disconsolately on our track. Of course we blamed our dogs for our discomfiture; they were certainly a great deal too fat to be in proper hunting condition. On our way home we saw at some distance two other kangaroos, one a very large one standing not less than six feet in height, a description known in bush phraseology as an "Old Man." These are much less fleet than a smaller kind known as "flyers," which it is considered a feat for horses and hounds to run down.

These large creatures, though comparatively easy to overtake, make a desperate defence when at bay, often killing more than one of their canine assailants. Their weapon of offence and defence, really a very

formidable one, is the large claw on their hind foot, with which they inflict fearful gashes, literally tearing open the bodies of their enemies. The hunter has to approach them very cautiously, as they do not hesitate when hard pressed to attack even a human foe. The one we saw was perched on a tall cliff far above us, so that pursuit was impossible, and as the day was now wearing on we were obliged to retrace our steps and to content ourselves with the sight of our game. On our return home we started two kangaroo rats, or rabbits as they are more appropriately called, and our dogs caught one of them, a pretty little creature, about the size of a rabbit, but with short fore legs, and the *pouch*—the characteristic of nearly all the Australian quadrupeds, almost the only exception being the Dingo, or native dog. We fell in also with one of those jackall-like creatures on our homeward ride, but we were all too tired to give it chase, so it escaped unmolested.

Speaking of these “dingoes,” I may mention that many persons are of opinion that they are not indigenous to New Hol-

land, but were brought across at some very remote period by the natives of New Guinea or some of the islands opposite the Northern coast, and thence by degrees gradually spread themselves southward, and in time over the whole island of New Holland. The only possible ground for this theory is, that the dingo is found in every part of New Holland except the island of Tasmania, which geologists maintain once constituted a portion of the main island, from which it is now separated by Bass's Straits. The conclusion drawn from this by those who hold this opinion is, that the four-footed *Freekirkers* in question only came to New Holland after the *Disruption*.

It was quite late at night when we reached our station, having ridden in all some forty miles or so—something of a feat for me to accomplish, my powers of horsemanship being by no means very great. Our show of game was, alas, a somewhat ignominious one ; it consisted only of the poor little kangaroo rat, which dangled in solitary grandeur from the saddle bow. We had in vain attempted to rescue a Bandicoot from

the fangs of one of our dogs, to add a little to our display, but "Whitefoot" chose to regard it as his part of the day's spoils, and could not be prevailed on to part with it till too much mangled to be cared for even as a trophy. The *Bandicoot* is a small animal about the size of the guinea-pig, and, I believe, somewhat resembles it in form and habits ; but this I learned only from hearsay, as I never had the opportunity of seeing one to greater advantage than in Whitefoot's jaws. The kangaroo rabbit I had dressed the next day, roasted and stuffed, in hare fashion, and very nice it proved, by no means inferior to our European rabbit. Another small variety of the kangaroo tribe, the "Rock Wallaby," bears a very close resemblance to the hare ; indeed when dressed in the same way and eaten with currant jelly, it would be by no means easy to distinguish them apart, always supposing that there was the slightest possibility of their being partaken of in the same place.

These little creatures live always among rocks and cliffs, and a moonlight night affords the best opportunity for shooting

them. In the daytime they hide among the nooks and crevices of the rocks, and one may wander over their favourite haunts without seeing anything of these shy night-loving animals; but as the evening closes, they come out in hundreds, and I have been told that it is really a very pretty sight to watch their graceful gambols.

Fishing was an occasional amusement of ours—though I ought, perhaps, hardly to say of ours, for I don't think I ever succeeded myself in securing a single finny captive, but nevertheless the banks of the river were a very favourite resort of mine, and many a pleasant hour I have spent despite the mosquitoes, seated under the shade of a large swamp oak, with rod and line and book, now reading, and now watching my more skilful or more fortunate companions—for I really do think there is nothing but luck in fishing. Of course I am not now speaking of the highest branch of the art, fly fishing—which, I am willing to believe, requires both skill and practice, and its votaries I hold in all due respect—but of simple fishing with the worm. It

was in vain that I got the most skilful hands to adjust my bait, that I chose the best hole for my throw, or that I exhibited the most praiseworthy patience—not a single nibble was I ever favoured with ; while some one else standing by my side would pull out one fish after another in triumphant succession, to my sore discomfiture and mortification.

The most curious inhabitant of the streams in New South Wales is a water mole, the *Platypus Ornithoryncus Paradoxus* of the naturalists. This little creature bears a strong resemblance to a beaver in some respects, but it has the broad bill of the duck, and is well called the link between the world of fowls and beasts—it might almost be added, of fishes too, for its habits are quite amphibious, or rather it is more at home in the water than on land. The aborigines assert it lays eggs, and showed some to my husband, but he fancies those they exhibited were the produce of the Iguana. The “*Platypus*” is, as may be supposed, an awkward-looking creature, but its fur is beautifully fine and soft, a mixture of silvery gray and black ; and could skins

be procured in sufficient numbers, they would form a beautiful material for boas, muffs, &c. ; but it is by no means easy to get a shot at these little creatures, they are very shy, and at the least alarm dive into the water and, I suppose, reach their nests or warrens by orifices under water, as at all events they do not re-appear in the same part of the river for hours after having been disturbed. Another supposed inhabitant of the deep water holes of the large rivers is the *Bunyip*. The many stories told by the blacks concerning this monster were long supposed to be mythical, indeed some people still consider them to be so, but I believe it is beginning to be a generally received opinion that these stories have some foundation in fact, and that the bunyip has a real tangible existence. It is supposed to be a species of alligator, and this seems the more probable as it has lately been ascertained beyond a doubt that the alligator does exist in the more northern parts of New Holland. There was a large water-hole, or, as we should call it, reach, in the Bundarrah about a mile from our cottage, in which nothing

could induce the aborigines to bathe, as it was the reported haunt of one of these monsters.

The Bundarrah, though known also as the Big River, was not generally either very wide or very deep, though always a rapid stream. Sometimes, however, an immense volume of water comes down from the hills, its banks are overflowed, and the whole of the surrounding country flooded. On one occasion, while I was at our station, the backwater from the river running with the waters of the creek entirely submerged our lower garden, and effected an entrance into the most distant of our huts; another four-and-twenty hours' rain would have obliged us to take refuge on the hills, which would have been a matter of some little difficulty, had the water once reached our cottage, for it was built on a slight eminence, the adjacent ground being lower all round. Most fortunately, however, the rain ceased, and the waters subsided almost as rapidly as they had risen. Fearfully hot weather succeeded this flood, and the plague of mosquitoes during this period was almost

unendurable. As a new arrival they regarded me as their legitimate prey, and most cruelly they tormented me. After all, they are more to be dreaded than any member of the insect or reptile tribe; their only rivals in the art of tormenting are the flies, which, though generally stingless, yet manage to tease and worry one almost more than their venomous *cousins*. There is a most troublesome member of this family, the Sandfly, which attacks the eye; its bite produces little pain at the time, but causes the eyeballs and lids to swell most fearfully in the course of a few hours, utterly blinding and disfiguring the unhappy victim for some days. This disease is commonly called the "swelling blight," and very painful it is for the time it lasts, though it causes no permanent injury to the eye. Far more to be dreaded is the "sandy blight," really a terrible complaint, leaving its bad effects for months, and even years; indeed, I doubt if a really bad attack is ever entirely recovered from. It closely resembles the Egyptian ophthalmia. I have had the misfortune to suffer from bad attacks of both, and I

fancy they are really the same complaint. Children suffer terribly from it, and most distressing it is to see the poor little things. The remedy, too, is very painful: a caustic lotion, sometimes blue stone dissolved in water, sometimes in the milder form of sulphate of zinc—the safer remedy of the two, I think, and also very effective in preventing the complaint, if applied during the first symptoms. A few drops of this every now and then, and cold applications, with a dose or two of calomel in as large doses as can be taken, are now the most approved remedies in this complaint, though it leaves great dimness and weakness in the eyes for a length of time, and those who have once suffered from it are very liable to a second attack. With the aborigines it is as common and as fatal as ophthalmia is in Egypt, frequently causing the loss of one or both eyes, and a very miserable spectacle the poor blind Blacks present; deprived of the power of procuring their own food, they are often half starved, as there is seldom much help extended to them by their own tribe, and they have to trust for their subsistence

principally to the charity of the settlers. The great prevalence of ophthalmia, especially in some districts, I really look on as one of the greatest drawbacks of the Bush. Generally speaking, however, there is very little illness in the interior—a fortunate circumstance, as medical assistance is so very difficult to be procured. We were no worse off than the generality of residents in the Bush, but we were fifty miles from a doctor! and there was every probability that a messenger dispatched to "Warialda," his head quarters, would find that he had been sent for by some one living in another direction, so that little dependence could be placed on medical aid, and a slight acquaintance with medicine is a most useful species of knowledge for the squatter to possess. We were the same distance, too, from a church and clergyman, and our nearest visitable neighbours lived five and twenty miles off. Only once during a residence of six months did I receive a visit from a lady, though gentlemen not unfrequently made our cottage their resting place for the night. Fresh faces are always welcomed at a Bush table;

and though often our visitors were not very refined specimens of their class, yet when they could be got to speak of something else but the eternal sheep and cattle, and literally call back their wits from *wool gathering*, it used to amuse me much to hear them talk; for they had all curious bits of information on colonial subjects, and many had gone through strange adventures, which they related with great *naïveté*, and were listened to by me with much interest; my colonial experience was something so new after our quiet home life, and I had not during my short residence time to get wearied of it. Nevertheless, it was a great delight to me when we did leave Keera, and paid a visit to our nearest neighbours, old friends of my husband's, to find myself once more in civilized society, and among ladies with whom I could talk over all small matters—from our babies' wardrobes to old London parties and acquaintances; for curiously enough one of our hosts I had last met in a London ball-room, where we little expected our next encounter would be in his cottage on the Bundarrah, far in the wilds

of Australia. Not that I had by any means felt unmixed pleasure in leaving Keera, it was such a very pretty spot, and endeared to me, moreover, as my baby's birthplace; there was such a weeping and wailing, too, among the tribe of Blacks assembled to witness our departure, that I could not help feeling somewhat sorry to wish them good bye. When we reached the crossing place of the creek, the last spot from which the cottage was visible, I reined up my horse, and took a long, last look at the little home-stead. Then, with the words "Homeward ho!" on our lips, we cantered briskly on to overtake our dog-cart, which had started before us, and which contained our small living treasures and their nurse, by whose side we kept for the rest of our day's journey. It was rather a tedious one, the road being a very bad one for any wheeled conveyance, so that it was quite late when we arrived at "Beverly," a pretty little cottage on the banks of the Bundarrah, belonging to an acquaintance of my husband's, who, though away from home, had kindly placed his cottage at our disposal. There

we remained for the night, hoping to be able to cross over to "Tienga," our ultimate destination, early the following morning ; but we found to our dismay that owing to recent floods the river was not fordable, so that at Beverly my husband left me and returned to Keera, as he had still some business arrangements to make there.

I really hardly regretted the absence of our kind host during my stay, for I thought the presence of two babies would have sufficed to upset the good temper of the most benevolent of bachelors, especially as in a Bush cottage the slightest sound is heard from one end of the building to the other. However, our stay was not destined to be a long one ; the following day, one of our friends "over the water," having heard of our situation, came across and drove us round by a safer ford to his cottage, where in the course of four or five days my husband joined me, and where we spent the pleasantest fortnight we passed in the colony, a period marked mentally with a white stone, and often now recalled with much pleasure.

CHAPTER XIV.

A false start—A fair one—Foul weather—A shepherd's hut—Bush tea—The Rocky River—The Red Gum tree—Weather bound—The Rocky River diggings—Gold finding—Alluvial diggings—Quartz crushing—A nugget—"All is not gold that glitters"—A friend in need.

WE were not a little sorry when the time arrived for us to leave Tienga and set out once more on our travels; but as there still remained a good deal of business to be got through in Sydney, and we were most anxious to get home again, we thought it best soon to be once more up and doing. As we wished to perform the journey as quickly as possible, we decided against camping; and, moreover, the autumn was so far advanced, that sleeping in a tent would have been rather cold work for any of us, and particularly trying to my wee baby, who was only three months old; so we resolved by making tolerably lengthy

stages, to make our run a station every night. Our travelling equipage, consequently, was much less formidable in appearance than it had been on our previous journey, consisting only of our dog-cart, with two horses driven tandem, and my saddle-horse which my servant-girl rode, as we found that besides our many packages, the dog-cart would only contain ourselves, our two children, and man-servant. Our first start was not a very propitious one. The horses had proved a little restive when brought round, and our friends had most kindly, and as it turned out most fortunately, volunteered to accompany us part of the way, taking my nurse and children in their carriage, while I rode on horseback. We got on pretty well for some five or six miles, till we came to the crossing place of a creek, where my husband somewhat imprudently allowed his horses to stop and drink; the leader being first satisfied, lifted up his head suddenly and twitched the blinkers off the creature in the shafts, it immediately started off, jolting the dog-cart with such force over some rocks in the bed

of the stream, that both my husband and our servant were thrown out with considerable violence; my husband fortunately alighted in a somewhat deep water hole, receiving no injury beyond a thorough soaking, while the servant contrived to hang on to the railing of the vehicle until the horses gained the bank, when he cleverly managed to slip off on the soft sand just before the vehicle turned over and brought the horses to a stand-still. Fortunately, on examination, little damage proved to have been done; some few things had been tossed into the stream, but these were easily fished out again, and the dog-cart itself had received no material injury; however, we thought it as well not to continue our journey that day, as this fright had by no means served to render our horses more tractable, and, moreover, the delay caused by the accident rendered it somewhat doubtful whether we could have reached the neighbouring station before nightfall; so, not very sorry for an excuse for prolonging our visit, we returned once more to Tienga, and, after two or three

days spent by my husband in getting his horses into somewhat better working order, we made a second and a more successful start, reaching Abingdon, the station to which we were bound, by sunset.

A very pretty homelike little place it was—a handsome verandah in front of the house, and a pretty garden surrounding it, in which grew some of the finest willows I ever remember having seen; my husband had but a slight acquaintance with the resident proprietor, and to me he was a perfect stranger; but we experienced from him the same kind hospitality that is still so extensively practised in the Bush of Australia. After a night's rest, we started again on a somewhat cloudy morning, trusting to be able to reach the next station without rain; but our expectations were destined to be disappointed, and ourselves and luggage most thoroughly drenched by a succession of merciless showers. Little idea can be formed of rain in Australia from the slow, steady-going drizzle, or even down-pour of this country. Australian torrents descend with a most vindictive

sort of vehemence, so that in five minutes all wearing apparel is thoroughly soaked through ; and two or three hours of this is terribly trying work, especially with two young children to take care of. Baby could be wrapped up and stowed away in the folds of my cloak ; but our poor little Jessie had to endure all the violence of rain and wind, and most anxiously on her account did I look out for some sheltering roof. At last we came to a sheep station, consisting of two rather miserable-looking cottages, one a mere shed, which had formerly been the proprietor's head station ; and although we knew his present residence could not be above five or six miles off, still, as we were not quite clear about the road to it, and there was no inn within eighteen or twenty miles, we preferred remaining where we were to the chance of two or three more hours of wandering up and down in search of better quarters. The shepherds being out with their flocks, we could not, however, get into the main building, but were obliged to content ourselves with the shed, which was fortunately

waterproof *at one end*, and contained, moreover, a fireplace. In it we soon contrived to have a famous fire blazing, near which we spread our plaids and opossum rugs for the children, whose clothes we changed, administered some hot arrowroot to them, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing them fast asleep, apparently none the worse for their cold shower-bath. Travelling with such little things had this advantage, that it made us very regardless of all small troubles and disagreeables which only affected ourselves, if we could only contrive to prevent the children from suffering from the roughing and exposure; and the many worries which would have tried our temper in other circumstances, we learned to care very little about. My servant-girl, too, was very happily not one of the complaining class; and the children once made comfortable, we seated ourselves round the fire, hung our drenched garments before it, and drank medicinally very hot weak tea without milk, and with the very blackest sugar. If I recollect rightly, we had nothing eatable with us but children's food, which I would

not allow to be touched. At last a grand discovery was made of a sack of potatoes placed in the verandah of the other cottage, and to these we helped ourselves unsparringingly, roasting them in the ashes. We also ascertained, by peeping through a window, that a fire was still smouldering in the fireplace, which must evidently have been lighted that morning, so we argued from this, that the occupant would probably return at sunset, and were much consoled by the discovery. The result proved that we were right in our anticipations, as about six o'clock the bleating of sheep, and barking of dogs, told of the near approach of a flock and its shepherd, who, on becoming aware of our situation, unlocked the cottage doors and placed such accommodation as it offered, at our disposal. This was by no means very extensive, but, discovering a small room freer from draughts than the shed outside, and consequently more desirable as quarters for the night, we removed our rugs and shawls into it, and made up a couple of beds on the floor, which my nurse and I took possession of

with the children, while my husband and the man-servant stretched themselves before the kitchen fire, having first contrived to despatch some of the beef and damper offered us by our host. It was to the melancholy music of fast-falling rain patterning against the roof, that I closed my eyes and I had a sort of dreamy consciousness of hearing, through the thin walls, the shepherd telling my husband that the rivers would get up with this rain, and that we might have to remain there a week—a not very cheering prospect, it must be owned. However, next morning brought a temporary cessation of the storm, and, by starting very early we hoped to get across the river before the “*fresh*” had come down, in colonial parlance; and fortunately we succeeded in doing so. The stream whose course we were following up, was still our old friend the “Bundarrah,” of which the Rocky River, the Pactolus of New England, is a branch. In the bed and on the banks of the river, gold is found in considerable quantities, and as I was anxious not to leave the colony without having visited a

gold field, we proposed making a slight *détour*, and passing through these Rocky River diggings.

This was reserved for another day's journey, however, for this night we had to be contented with reaching "Balala," another station belonging to the proprietors of Abingdon, our previous resting-place. Our day's journey was a very pleasant one; passing through picturesque country, our horses by this time had got accustomed to their work, and I used to think the long stages really quiet enjoyable, our baby very considerably sleeping the greater part of the day, and our little girl apparently quite liking the travelling, never being the least troublesome. Sometimes towards evening she would get a little tired, and her delight as we approached a station was very amusing. "Oh, mamma, there are fences," she would cry out, poor little thing, and clap her tiny hands with pleasure. As we drove across the plain round "Balala," I observed, for the first time, a tree of the *Eucalyptus* tribe, known as the "Red Gum," from the colour of its wood, I believe; though a more appro-

priate name, if derived from its appearance, would have been the "Striped Gum or Zebra Tree," I thought. Its trunk was most curiously variegated, the bark being apparently in stripes of different colours—dark shining green and purple, red and straw colour—suggesting the idea of a natural kaleidoscope. So remarkable was the appearance of these trees (which are not known in the Gwydir district), that they attracted the attention of a favourite dog that had insisted on accompanying us on our travels, and the first tree that it saw, it stopped before it, barking furiously, and ran round and round it, evidently not knowing what to make of it. I fancy the dog's first impressions accorded with mine, that a huge snake of various hues had curled round and round the trunk ; and it was a long time before it got sufficiently familiar with the singular appearance of these trees to pass them without some demonstration of fear or astonishment.

We reached Balala without any adventure about sunset, and most fortunate we were in having been able to make it that evening,

for another night's rain swelled the rivers so much that we were obliged to remain there for two or three days, congratulating ourselves that this fate had befallen us in comfortable quarters, and not in the small unfurnished room of the shepherd's hut. The family who generally resided here was absent in England, but a brother, who had been our host at Abingdon two or three days previously, made us welcome here also, and we waited with tolerable patience the subsiding of the flood. *My* troubles began here, however, inasmuch as I awoke the morning after our arrival without the power of opening my right eye, and reluctantly concluded I was destined to an attack of the much dreaded ophthalmia. The next day it happened to be a good deal better, and I most imprudently ventured to make a sketch of one of the curious Red Gum Trees, which of course made it much worse again ; and I did not mend matters the following day by taking a sketch of the Diggings, through which we passed. On this second occasion, however, I took the precaution of bandaging the inflamed eye, and using only the sound one.

It was a very curious scene, this town of tents and bark huts, and the swarms of diggers busily engaged in the bed of the stream and on its banks.

The diggings here are what are called "alluvial" that is, the gold is found in the form of fine dust sparingly mingled with the soil of the river's bed and banks, and the precious particles are obtained by carefully washing the earth.

The usual mode of search for alluvial gold is somewhat in this fashion. From three to four diggers unite, forming themselves into a sort of joint stock company, sharing their labour and their gains, and having each obtained a licence from the Gold Commissioner of the District, proceed at once to a locality which the experience of other diggers has proved to be productive; a pit of considerable depth is first made, the earth which is supposed to be auriferous being thrown up in a bank. It is first carefully examined by some of the party for nuggets (which are occasionally though not very frequently found in this soil, they being more generally embedded in or mixed with quartz rock). After this has been done, the earth is con-

veyed in barrows to the edge of the water, where portions of it are from time to time placed in the cradle—a wooden box having a sort of coarse sieve fitted into it at one end, which allows earth and sand to pass through, but retains coarser gravel and stones, which are thrown away. When a sufficiency of auriferous earth has been placed in the cradle, water is poured on it, and it is kept continually rocked by the washer; so that in time the earth and lighter particles are washed away, and nothing but the gold with a very small admixture of sand remains at the bottom. When gold is found mixed with quartz, it is far more difficult to obtain. Occasionally some lucky adventurer may make his fortune by the discovery of a colossal nugget; but generally its extraction is a tedious and laborious project, requiring the aid of expensive machinery for crushing the quartz to a fine powder; this is afterwards mixed with quicksilver, which searches out the minute particles of gold, and uniting with them forms an amalgam, which is separated by being squeezed through chamois leather, the quicksilver escaping and the gold remaining pure. This, however, though the

surest mode of obtaining gold, can only be adopted by companies, or by people possessing large capital, who can afford to wait some time for a return on their outlay, and even then, though quartz crushing may yield a very *fair* return, the average profits are said to be by no means extraordinary. Some idea may be formed of the vast labour and trouble attending this process, from the fact that a superintendent of one of these works, at the Bendigo Diggings, told my husband, that they considered the concern payed them fairly, if from a ton of rock they could succeed in extracting four ounces of the precious metal. Pretty specimens of quartz veined or mixed with gold are not very easy to be obtained. A very beautiful one was given us by a friend, which came from one or other of the Victoria Diggings. The quartz was a pure white, with here and there the faintest tinge of pink, and the gold stood up in points almost like tiny stalactites. I thought of having it set as a brooch or bracelet clasp, but so very brittle was it, that though packed with a good deal of care, pieces here and there chipped off, and I found it was hopeless

to think of fixing a pin to it. The largest nugget I ever saw was the property of one of our homeward-bound fellow-passengers, and was supposed to be worth seven hundred pounds; its weight, as may be supposed, was enormous, in appearance it somewhat resembled those meteorolites, the bright shiny appearance of which excites so largely the admiration of children. I believe mica is sometimes found embedded in quartz in the same manner, and with much the same appearance, as gold, so that a novice may easily be led to form a very exalted idea of the worth of his treasure trove, but the more experienced hand knows easily from the weight of the nugget, what is its real value. I remember, at the Rocky Diggings, very much amusing my husband by pointing out to him what I conceived to be gold dust, shining brightly in the sand on the river's banks, but which he informed me was really only a collection of minute particles of this brilliant but worthless substance. Our sojourn at the Diggings was not a very lengthy one; after watching the process of gold washing for some time, and purchasing

a small sample of the gold dust, we set out again on our journey, hoping to reach Salisbury, the head-quarters of one of the largest sheep owners of the colony, that same evening. Before leaving the Diggings we had the river to cross, not a very simple undertaking, as it was much swollen by the late rains. We had fortunately met our late host in the neighbourhood, and he very kindly insisted on seeing us safely across the stream, taking the children over on his horse, and leading mine across, while his servant took the leader's head, and materially assisted my husband in getting our dog-cart safely over. So we arrived, without accident, on the opposite bank, having only narrowly escaped drowning some birds, whose cage was hung from the footboard behind, and who looked all the worse for their cold bath. After saying good-bye to our kind acquaintance, we drove on as rapidly as the bad roads would permit, to Salisbury. We were now fairly in New England, on the high table-land, generally a very favourite part of the colony, but one which I confess did not possess me much in its favour. It is true,

the season I saw it in was a very unfavourable one; there had been a great deal of rain—an unusual thing in Australia; and the country through which we passed seemed converted into a vast marsh or bog. We saw several cranes flying about, and once caught sight of a "Native companion" standing among the tall reeds at the verge of a large piece of water. This bird, a species of the crane family, is a great lover of wet marshy ground, a predilection which we by no means shared on the evening in question. It really was very cold, there was a raw dampness in the air which seemed to chill us through and through—almost what we should call in Scotland an "East ha'." It was quite late at night before we reached our journey's end, and drew up before Mr. M.'s comfortable homestead; and very glad we were to exchange the bitter cold of outside for the genial warmth and glow of the bright fires within; and a great relief it was to my mind to see my children comfortably deposited in warm beds, none the worse for their exposure to the chilly atmosphere of a winter's night in New England.

CHAPTER XV.

Salisbury Court—A squatter's residence—Lost horses—Ophthalmia—The Moonboye Range—Tamworth—An unpleasant situation—The Burning Mountain—Flood-bound—Another upset—Fording the river—A Canadian traveller's tale—Driving *through* a road—A “Slough of Despond”—The last of the bogs—Megæthon—A philological reason.

THE following day being Sunday, we were glad to accept our host's invitation and make it a day of rest. “Salisbury Court” is certainly one of the most favourable specimens of a Bush residence in the colony, and the visitor to it may almost fancy himself in one of the old country houses of England. The rooms are numerous and spacious, and—rarest and most valuable of luxuries in the far interior—the establishment even boasts of an excellent library! A great ornament to the house is the spacious verandah floored with polished wood, its railing gracefully festooned with vines and

many lovely creepers, among which I remember noticing particularly the graceful "*Morandea*" with its bright azure bells; a few steps lead down to the flower garden, which at the time we saw it wore a somewhat wintry aspect, but which in spring and summer no doubt forms a very attractive feature in the landscape.

The fruit and vegetable gardens are also well kept, and on a somewhat extensive scale; indeed, the whole establishment gives one the idea of its proprietor possessing something rarer in the colony than great wealth, a refined and cultivated taste. He is at present residing at home, and is member for one of our cathedral towns, having, I suppose, little intention of returning to his bush home, picturesque and comfortable as it is. His brother, who superintends his station, was our host, and somewhat lengthy he must have thought our visit, as circumstances obliged us to trespass on his hospitality for some days.

On the Monday, when preparing for a start, our horses were not forthcoming, and to our dismay a broken panel was discovered

in the fence surrounding the paddock, through which little doubt remained that they had effected their escape.

Nothing could be seen or heard of them in the neighbourhood that day, or the next, and the following my husband set out in pursuit of them, making sure that they had gone in the direction of Keera—the birth-place of two of them. And so it proved to be, for after having ridden some fifty miles in that direction, on the Saturday morning he met with a gentleman who told him he had seen them shortly before, and recommended him to make for a creek which they would have to pass, and where they might probably indulge in a midday *siesta*. He did so, and found the runaways in the middle of the stream—not at the usual crossing-place, however, which was in sight of a station—and the cunning creatures knowing they were doing wrong, thought that if seen they would be caught and impounded in the stockyard. They really must have had some such notion, as from what we heard of their movements they had always kept the road, excepting when in

the vicinity of a house, and had then regularly made a *détour* to avoid it. Very sheepish they looked, my husband said, when they caught sight of him, and allowed themselves to be driven back to Salisbury without attempting to run away. All this time I had been confined to my room, almost to my bed, with a terrible attack of ophthalmia. I shall never forget what I suffered, or the agony caused by the admission of one ray of light into my room; and although it was made as dark as possible, it always seemed to me as if a hundred suns were blazing on it. A more distressing complaint I cannot imagine. I do not think I ever suffered as much from anything, and months passed before my eyes were strong enough to admit of my doing anything by candle-light; indeed, even now I often suffer from them in the evening. I was fortunately a little better when my husband's return enabled us to set out once more on our journey, though for several days I was obliged to keep a thick bandage over my eyes; and pleasanter situations may well be imagined than mine was—quite unable to

see anything and perched up on a high dog-cart, with my little baby in my arms, holding on as best I might, with one hand to the side railing. The road, too, was very rough, so that it was often as much as I could do to prevent myself from being jolted out, and alas! our troubles by no means ended with the day's journey; any hopes we might entertain of a good night's rest after it, generally being destined to prove delusive and a snare, for Master Baby thought he did his duty properly if he abstained from worrying us on the road, and that after sleeping all day no mortal infant could be expected to sleep all night, too; so just as we had accomplished the day's work and were longing

“To draw around the weary head
The curtain of repose,”

our small tormentor would wake up, looking as bright as possible; and on more than one occasion I have had to give up all idea of sleeping, and play or walk about with him the whole night—a somewhat trying occupation—especially if it be taken into considera-

tion that each ray of candlelight caused me no small amount of pain.

The route we took on this occasion was necessarily a different one from that by which we had journeyed up the country, as we had to descend from the high table-land of New England to the level country known as "Liverpool Plains." After leaving Salisbury our first resting place was a small inn on the banks of a creek known as "Carlisle's Gully," and our next a little town called "Bendemeer," on the Macdonald River, where we arrived early in the day, in order to give our horses a long rest before attempting the descent of the Moonboye Range, which was to be our next day's undertaking. The ascent of these mountains from the New England side is (as I have before said) a mere nothing, as in New England we were on the lofty table land, several hundred feet above the elevation of the Liverpool Plains, across which our road lay; but the descent is something tremendous, worse in my opinion than that of either the Waldron or Liverpool Ranges. The numerous skeletons of working bullocks strewn all over the

pass, prove what a terrible trial of strength it is to these poor animals to accomplish the ascent from the plains, and one or two teams stuck midway, unable for the time to progress any further, are sure to meet the traveller's eye.

A great difference in climate and vegetation is observable between the table-land and the plains, the latter being in the winter season the pleasantest place of residence, though at other times the palm is awarded to "New England" by those most qualified to form an opinion on the subject; still I confess, for my own part, I was not prepossessed in favour of this district, it is true I saw very little of it, but its swamps and bogs seemed never ending; more than once we got engulfed in them, and had no little difficulty in extricating ourselves and horses.

Tamworth was our first resting place on the Liverpool Plains. It is rather a nice little township, as colonial towns go, and we were somewhat late in leaving it the following morning for our next stage, Currabubbla, which we did not reach in consequence till late in the evening. As it was a very dark

night and the road was a very bad one, we deemed it safer to walk for the last mile of our journey; so, having arranged that my husband was to take on the dog-cart and return for us, we groped on as best we might, my servant girl carrying baby, and I leading my little girl with one hand and my riding horse with the other, trying to keep up poor little Jessie's spirits by telling her wonderful stories. At last my narrative was checked and my consternation not a little roused by discovering that we had contrived to get into the middle of a drove of not very quiet cattle, which we afterwards found were being driven down to the Maitland market. I do not think I was ever more frightened in my life than on making this discovery, more especially as I gathered from the tones of the stockmen that they were not quite so sober as they ought to have been. To retrace our steps was, of course, my first endeavour, but this was not so easy in the darkness of night; my horse, too, was getting restive, and my little girl clinging to my dress in tears. The relief it was to me to hear my husband's voice

may be imagined, and by his assistance we soon extricated ourselves from our most unpleasant situation, and were soon ensconced in the worst inn's *best* room. These roadside inns are by no means very comfortable, though I believe much improved of late years, and we never failed in getting a private sitting room, a luxury in former days not often attainable, I have heard.

We continued our journey for some days without meeting with any adventure worth recording, crossing the Liverpool and Waldron Ranges with great ease; the ascent, as is the case with the Moonboyes, is by no means so arduous for the traveller down the country as for one going into the interior, as each day's journey is a descent more or less gradual all the way to Maitland. At the foot of the Waldrons we stopped, though we arrived there very early in the day, in order to afford me an opportunity of seeing Mount Wingen, better known as the "Burning Mountain."

Our resting place was a little inn called, not inappropriately, the "Highland Home," and its host informed us that we should

easily find our way to the crater, or rather to the burning portion of the hill, which he assured us was not above a couple of miles from his house; accordingly, trusting to his directions and to my husband's recollections of a visit there many years ago, we set off, but after wandering about in all directions for two or three hours, we were obliged to confess ourselves quite unable to discover any traces of the object of our search, which I own I should have been inclined to look on as a myth had I not seen the clouds of smoke rising from the summit of the range. Thoroughly knocked up, we returned to the inn, but very much disliking the notion of being defeated in the object for which we had stopped here, we persuaded the innkeeper to promise to show us the way to it himself the next morning; so, starting at sun-rise, by seven o'clock we found ourselves in the promised land, after a walk of some four or five miles, instead of the two we had been told of. And really it was a serious undertaking, even to one who knew something of Alpine passes, the track now leading across gullies, now skirting deep

ravines, and finally ascending the most precipitous part of the mountain, so that I was more than once tempted to give up our expedition; however, my husband urged me on, and at last the summit was won.

A curious sight here presented itself. The place where the fire is at present raging is a flat or slightly concave surface, some acres in extent, surrounded by still higher hills, one of the nearest bearing traces of having once been the prey of the devouring element which now ravages the plateau at its feet. The soil has the appearance of red gravel, while here and there are deep fissures from which the white smoke ascends in clouds. At night, I am told, flames may also be seen issuing from it, and even in the broad daylight, by peeping down one of the fissures we plainly saw the fire and the red hot stones. Our guide assured us that for upwards of seven years he had been in the habit of lighting his pipe at this same spot, and that in his time he had observed little alteration in the course of the flames.

The generally received opinion touching the nature of this phenomenon is, that its

origin is not volcanic, but that it is simply a seam of coal on fire. I believe the celebrated geologist Mr. Clark pronounced in favour of this theory, but it seems rather extraordinary that the very same crevices should continue smoking for so many years; the extent of the seam must be very enormous, one would imagine. We remained long enough on the spot to enable me to make a slight sketch of it, and then hurried back to the inn, got breakfast, and were off by nine o'clock, not wishing to lose another day; however, had we known the melancholy fate that was before us we should not have hurried ourselves.

We had observed the state of the roads becoming gradually worse and worse as we got nearer to Maitland, and between the "Highland Home" and Scone they surpassed in badness anything I had ever before experienced, giving proof that large quantities of rain must have lately fallen. A few miles beyond Scone we should have the Hunter to cross, and my husband was beginning to have unpleasant forebodings touching the possibility of getting over it, so we questioned

the first individual we met in the vicinity of the township touching its fordability. "Won't get across for a week at least, sir," was the not very consolatory answer—intelligence which damped our spirits not a little. A week in a miserable little township in the far interior, with nothing in the world to do, no books procurable, was certainly by no means a cheering prospect. But we were obliged to make the best of it, as we found our informant's intelligence only too correct. And for a whole week we there vegetated. I have no very clear recollection of what we did with ourselves, beyond going to bed very early and getting up very late. I think our principal recreation consisted in gathering mushrooms, which grew in considerable quantities in the outskirts of the town. Once we varied this amusement and spent the afternoon at a farm in the neighbourhood, belonging to a gentleman of our acquaintance, but not being so learned as I ought to be in farm matters, I am afraid I noticed little else in this establishment excepting the untidiness and generally ruinous look of the cottage residence and farm

buildings, so little in keeping with the large extent of land composing the estate; indicating on the whole a slipshod system of managing things in general, which would have much distressed one of our Scotch agriculturists. But then the proprietor was not in the habit of residing there, which, no doubt, in part accounted for its uncomfortable neglected appearance. After a week's sojourn at Scone, we had the satisfaction of hearing one evening that the river had subsided considerably, and that in all probability it would be fordable on the morrow, so we packed up our things and prepared for an early start. The following morning was bright and fine, and by an early hour we were all ready; however, we were not destined to make a good *beginning* of this day's journey, whatever the ending might be. Our leading horse, frightened, I suppose, by the terrible state of the roads, and remembering his comfortable quarters in the stables of the inn, when urged to begin his work, instead of ~~starting~~ properly, swerved slightly round in the direction of his old lodgings; in doing so he missed his

footing in the slippery soil, plunged one leg into a hole nearly up to his chest, and fell down, thereby dragging the blinkers from the horse in the shafts, which in consequence immediately plunged, reared, made a bound forward, and over went the dog-cart, all of us being thrown out in the thick mud. Fortunately, from the accident having occurred at the very door of the inn, there was plenty of assistance at hand, and the horses were immediately secured.

My first thought of course was for baby, who was sleeping quietly in my lap at the time of the upset, and though thrown out of my arms and to some little distance by the jolt, he had fallen so comfortably on the soft mud that he was still fast asleep when picked up; not so my little girl, however, who was so very much frightened that she would hardly allow herself to be lifted into the dog-cart again, and used constantly to say in most piteous tones when afraid of any future catastrophe, "Don't kill Dettie." However, she was only frightened, not hurt in the very least, and my husband escaped equally well. I, too, had very little to com-

plain of, merely bruising my left arm on which I fell, and slightly spraining the wrist; nor was the damage done to dog-cart or harness considerable, so that by the end of an hour we were ready once more to set off. We crossed the river without any accident, though it was still so high as to be only just fordable, the water actually coming into the dog-cart; the children were carried across by some persons encamped on the banks, who afterwards led my horse over and then returned to do a similar good office for my servant girl, affording us indeed all the assistance in their power, in the kindly fashion of the Bush.

The river once crossed, we managed to get on the same evening to Muswelbrook, through such roads!—nothing I could say about them would enable any one at home to conceive the state they were in.

The only thing that could give one who had never been out of England any idea of their condition, is the well-known though somewhat apocryphal tale of a traveller on a Canadian Corderoy road, whose right of treasure trove in a hat which he observed

moving about on the surface of a bog by the roadside, was disputed by its submerged wearer, who claimed the aid of the traveller to get him out of his rather serious difficulty, and afterwards put in a word for his horse, which, being under him, was in a still worse predicament.

It is really a marvel to me that *our* bones are not at this moment whitening in some of the Australian bogs.

Driving tandem with skittish horses over or rather *through* this terrible soil, and across flooded rivers, is really somewhat nervous work, especially when you have two young children with you. There really was not a moment during that journey down the country that I was not fully prepared for, and indeed, rather expecting an accident; it was really a constant strain on the nerves which, though not naturally very easily frightened, I do not think I got over for months. After such a confession, it may seem ridiculous to say that there was an excitement in it all which I did not altogether dislike, but so it was, and it was really with feelings of something like regret

that I hailed the approaching termination of our Bush journeyings. Before we reached Maitland, however, we had some terrible "Sloughs of Despond" to get over, indeed I hardly know how our horses contrived to pull us through them. On one occasion we got thoroughly bogged, the wheels sinking into the mud till the naves were barely visible, and the horses, in their strenuous endeavours to extricate us from our dilemma, pulled till traces and harness all gave way, and they fairly walked out of the shafts. Fortunately, when this catastrophe happened we were not more than a hundred yards from a little public-house, a very wretched place, but still affording shelter for the night; and as good luck would have it, mine host had, in former days, been a cobbler, so he and my husband together managed to patch up the harness in the course of the evening, and the next day we set off early for Maitland, reaching it in such a travel-stained dilapidated condition, that the people fairly turned out of their houses to look at us; and such was the well-known state of the country, that when they heard where we had come

from, the somewhat contemptuous looks with which they had hitherto regarded our turn-out were exchanged for glances of reverence and admiration, such as might be bestowed on a veteran warrior returning from the wars. We only stayed in Maitland long enough to make a few very necessary purchases, and drove on the same evening to Morpeth, intending to embark for Sydney the following morning, but circumstances detained us here a day longer; as I was not a little fatigued with all the travelling, I was glad to make the day of detention a time of rest. My husband spent some hours of it in visiting an old acquaintance who was encamped in the neighbourhood, awaiting some amendment in the state of the roads before attempting to make any further progress. He had lately returned from England, and had brought out with him some wonderful machine, a "self-laying endless railway" as the newspapers styled it, or the "Megaethon," as its owner had christened it. I did not see this wonderful affair, but was told it was a steam engine, which would lay its own rails, and thus be of great service in

taking supplies up the country; that it would also plough land, work as a stationary engine, turn a flour mill, &c. Its name puzzled us not a little, and my husband asked his friend from what he had derived it. He said he meant to have called it "Megathærion," from some antediluvian monster, but that there was not room on the board to paint the whole word, so he cut it down to "Megæthon." After this original explanation, it amused me not a little when, on some subsequent occasion, I heard some *savans* discussing its origin and tracing it to some Greek root.

We were sorry to hear afterwards what we were, however, somewhat inclined to suspect from the first, that as a *locomotive* this engine did not answer. It might do very well on the smooth turnpike roads of the old country, but was not likely to succeed on the rough and steep ascents of a Bush track, in ploughing through swamps, or in crossing swollen rivers; and the last we heard of our friend and his steam hobby was, that after waiting some weeks in hopes of the state of the roads improving, and

making one or two vain starts, he had "Megæthon" taken to pieces, placed on a bullock dray, and with the aid of a couple of teams of bullocks, conveyed to his station, where as a stationary engine it is to be hoped it will answer his most sanguine anticipations.

CHAPTER XVI.

Anticipations—The Bush near Sydney—The roads again—The flood on the Hunter of 1857—The Liverpool Railway—A roadside inn—Appin—More rain—Retracing our steps—An unpleasant habit—Illawarra—The Cabbage Tree Palm—The Garden of Australia—A case of plants—Our feathered and four-footed fellow-passengers—Preparing to re-embark.

THE voyage from Morpeth to Sydney was rather rough and unpleasant, and as I lay on the sofa of the little cabin, almost too ill to attend even to baby, I only remember having one distinct thought, which assumed the form of a speculation as to whether I should ever survive the voyage to England, and if (should I ever find myself at home again), any inducement sufficiently powerful could arise to make me set foot again in sailing ship or steamer.

The first week after our arrival in Sydney was devoted to some very necessary shopping; at the end of this time my husband was

obliged to go to Melbourne on some law business. I remained behind, in the hopes that he would be able to rejoin me in two or three weeks, and glad on my children's account of a little rest and quiet.

However, week after week passed away without my husband's being able to get away, and it was not until the end of July, after an absence of nearly two months, that he was at last enabled to return to Sydney. I had been residing in the meantime some ten miles out of town, near the small railway station of Ashfield, at an out-of-the-way place, prettily situated quite in the Bush; I found it both healthier and pleasanter than a residence in Sydney, and used very much to enjoy the long rambles through the woods with my nurse and children in search of the wild flowers which were just beginning to come into blossom. In-doors I had plenty of occupation in preparing for our coming voyage, so the time did not hang so very heavily on my hands. After my husband's return we had plenty to do, our few leisure days we devoted to exploring the neighbourhood on foot and on horseback.

Driving was not very practicable, so very bad were the roads, even at this short distance from Sydney. In one place, close to the main track, was a quagmire, which we were particularly cautioned against, as not many weeks before an unfortunate cow had got bogged in it, and actually died there, all endeavours to extricate her proving useless. This fact may give some notion of the state of the country at that time; it is not always quite so bad, but the season had been an unusually rainy one, and the roads were really hardly passable. Indeed, unfortunate as we had considered ourselves at the time, in the weather we had met with on our journey down the country, we had reason afterwards to congratulate ourselves that we had not been a month later in setting out, as we should then have found the country really impassable. The months of June and July, 1857, will, I fancy, belong remembered by the inhabitants of the Hunter River district.

So severe were the floods, that great part of the town of Maitland was swept away, and the damage done to property was very

considerable. The papers of the day were full of the disasters that were occurring; many travellers were reported to have perished, and the losses among flocks and herds were very great. One gentleman, an acquaintance of my husband's, was said to have lost not less than twenty thousand sheep! Many of the small settlers were still more to be pitied, as everything they possessed was swallowed up by the remorseless waters. Homesteads that had been erected at the expense of much personal labour, the fruit of many years of privation and toil, were all swept away, and sad tales of destitution were told on all sides. On the other hand, to prove the truth of the old proverb "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good," there were some who benefited by the inundation, for I have heard that lands in the vicinity of these rivers, which were formerly considered of little value, have been so much enriched by the alluvial deposit left on them by the receding waters, as now to be considered available for agricultural purposes. As I have before remarked, these great floods

appear to recur at something like stated periods, and it is to be hoped that, learning from experience, future settlers may take care to choose elevated situations for the erection of their dwellings, and that when floods next occur the damage done by them may be comparatively slight. There being no large river in the vicinity of Sydney, the principal inconvenience caused to its inhabitants by these heavy rains is the terrible condition the roads get^{*} into, almost preventing all communication with the interior, excepting in the direction of Liverpool, to which place there is now railway communication; though even this mode of travelling is not very safe in wet weather, the embankments, &c., being somewhat apt to give way from becoming undermined by the rain. I never used to fancy the colonial railways very safe, the motion was always so great, and at all the little stations there seems to be less care and order exercised than is the case at home; however, as I am not aware that any serious accident* has ever taken

* Since our return to Great Britain, there has been one serious accident attended with the loss of many

place on either of the lines at present open, namely, between Sydney and Liverpool, and between Maitland and Newcastle, we must hope the negligence is only in little matters, and that in the management of their railroads, at all events, the colonists are not disposed to adopt American "go-aheadism," and carelessness of risk to human life. After my husband's return to New South Wales, we were able to make arrangements for embarking for home by the September mail steamer. Before leaving the colony, however, I was desirous of seeing something of the Illawarra district—"The Garden of New South Wales," I had heard it called—and we determined to avail ourselves of a week's leisure, and the improved state of the roads, for accomplishing this undertaking. Our most direct route would have been by steamer to Wollongong or Kiama, but as our wish was to see as much of the country

lives; amongst others, that of a well-known lawyer in Sydney, whose widow claimed and received as compensation a sum equivalent to a pension of £500 a-year for her life, besides large allowances for each of her children,

as possible, we determined on taking the bridle track leading across Mount Keera into the valley of the Illawarra, and returning to Sydney by sea, embarking ourselves and horses on board one of the little coasting steamers at one or other of the above-named ports. Accordingly, one fine morning we set off, leaving our children in charge of a friend, who had promised to take care of them during the short period we were likely to be absent. Our road led us in the first instance past Paramatta, which we left to the right, and thence through flat uninteresting country to Liverpool, a little town (some twenty miles from Sydney), the present terminus of the railway in this direction. Here we stopped for lunch, and were detained some little time at the inn by a violent thunder-storm. When the weather cleared up we proceeded in the direction of Campbelltown, hoping to reach it before nightfall; but heavy rain coming on again we were compelled to take refuge at a little roadside inn, where drenched through we bemoaned our lot over a smoky wood fire, eventually solacing ourselves with some

warm tea and an odd volume of one of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances.

The next morning was fine and bright, and with somewhat better spirits we set out again, but the roads were heavy, and our progress consequently not very rapid, so that it was one or two o'clock before we reached "Appin," a small village, the last resting place on the Sydney side of Mount Keera; and it was too late to attempt crossing the mountain—~~a~~—an formidable undertaking—that evening we were obliged to make up our minds to stay here. We were not by this time very difficult to please in the way of accommodation, but it seemed doubtful if we should meet with any in this out-of-the-way little place. At last the landlord of a little inn took compassion on us, and let us in, though giving us to understand it was quite as a favour, for he was giving up his business that week, and his house was in a great state of confusion. I afterwards learned, however, the accommodation, such as it was, the compassion of the landlord's wife, who chose to weave a little romance about us to the effect that we

were a newly married couple, and who was not a little disappointed when I informed her I had been married several years, and had three children! I must be excused if my recollections of Appin are not very favourable, for at this half-dismantled little inn we were detained three days by incessant torrents of rain, such as I had hardly ever witnessed before, even in the colony. What to do with ourselves we really hardly knew. We had neither writing nor drawing materials, nor were they procurable.

Our sole resources were a few Sydney newspapers a week or two old, and two or three books of a controversial tendency, written by Roman Catholics, with which my friend the hostess supplied us, in some hopes, I suppose, of effecting our conversion. At all events she might reckon pretty securely on my reading them "*faute de mieux*." At last, on the Saturday morning when the weather did clear up, we were obliged to give up all thoughts of an expedition to Illawarra. There was a stream to be crossed, at all times troublesome to ford, but which in its present state it would certainly have

been unsafe to have attempted for a week, and besides this our time was getting very short, and, unless we had made up our minds to wait for another steamer, the two or three weeks that remained had to be devoted to business. I began to long to see some little faces again; too, so we determined to retrace our steps, though we were both not a little disappointed at having to renounce all prospect of seeing the beautiful country round Kiama and Wollongong. We made an early start, hoping to reach home early that evening; but we had not calculated on the sea of mud and water that we should have to wade through. It was impossible to venture out of a foot pace, and even at this gentle rate of progression we got splashed from head to foot. Before we reached Liverpool my riding habit was such a mass of mud that the weight of it nearly dragged me off my saddle. This may seem an exaggeration to my readers, but to me it was a melancholy and most uncomfortable fact; indeed, so wretched was I and so forlorn was my appearance, that on the outskirts of the town I dismounted, and doffing

my long skirt, with my husband's assistance washed it in a waterhole, threw it across my horse's back, and made my entrance on foot in a somewhat ignominious though unencumbered fashion. We found we were fortunately in time to catch the last train to Sydney, for on horseback I could have gone no farther that day, so utterly worn out was I with our morning's adventure; so, making up our minds to send our servant back the following day for our equally tired horses, we availed ourselves of modern improvements, and while comfortably ensconced in the soft cushions of a first-class railway carriage, voted the palm of precedence to this mode of travelling. An hour or two's ride over a well beaten road or smooth even downs, is a very delightful recreation, but a journey of thirty or forty miles on horseback, performed at a foot pace, say at the rate of three, four, or at the utmost five miles an hour, is quite a different thing, and by no means a very enjoyable sort of undertaking. We left the train at Ashfield, and had then a walk of some three or four miles before we could reach our temporary home.

There was a bridge to be passed, too, which we were not very certain of finding in crossing order. However, we managed to get over it, though the day before, we were told, it had been quite submerged by the rise of the river. This difficulty surmounted, our troubles were ended, and we were soon comfortably seated round a bright fire, congratulating ourselves at being at home again. This ended our expedition to Illawarra, and quite sorry I was to leave the country without seeing something of this district. Its scenery, I believe, is very lovely, but its plants and flowers were our great attraction. They are very beautiful, quite different in character to those around Sydney and in the interior, partaking more of the nature of tropical vegetation. A species of palm known as the Cabbage Tree Palm (from the foliage of which the well-known cabbage-tree hat is made) used formerly to flourish there in great abundance, and gave an Oriental aspect to the landscape. Latterly it has become scarce, many of the trees having been wantonly destroyed by people who, I suppose, had nothing better to do. It de-

rives its name from the fact of its young shoots being very generally used as a vegetable by the natives, and bearing no small resemblance in flavour and consistency to the common garden cabbage.

Great varieties of orchidaceous plants are to be met with in this beautiful valley, and some rare ferns ; lovely creepers—*colonial* vines—also abound, and climbing from tree to tree, and from rock to rock, form a lovely drapery to the landscape. We had set our hearts on taking home a case of Australian plants, and so had been particularly anxious to get some of those indigenous to the Garden of Australia, as the Illawarra district has been called, but were obliged to content ourselves with the commoner flora to be met with in the neighbourhood of Sydney. Of these, alas ! not many survived the homeward voyage, and had we trusted entirely to the plants we brought, our green-house would be but ill stocked with Australian flowers ; a few Warratahs (the tulip-tree of the colony), a *Bignonia*, and three or four specimens of the Norfolk Island pine, and the *Araucaria Bidwellii* (the native Bread

fruit), with some two or three rare ferns, forming all the survivors of our originally rather large collection. But fortunately we also provided ourselves with plenty of seeds, upwards of a hundred different varieties, of which four-fifths were given us by the superintendent of the Botanical Gardens at Melbourne, the remainder having been obtained from the like public functionary in Sydney; and as many of these have come up they promise in time to form a very fine collection.

Besides these specimens of the flora of the country, we were anxious to take home some of the native birds, and we had collected at different times and in different ways some thirty or forty parrots and parroquets of various hues and sizes. We were told it would be impossible to take them home, that crossing the desert especially with such encumbrances was an unheard-of thing; however, we determined to try, trusting to making interest with some one in authority, for we knew that to keep them in our small cabins would be out of the question, and that we should have to depend

all along on the good nature of the ship's officers. As it happened we were very fortunate, we had a most good-natured captain, who gave us permission to keep our cages in the fore saloon of the ship, and afforded us every facility for looking after them, &c. And when we landed in England very few deaths had occurred among our favourites, but I should not recommend any one to follow our example; one or two pet birds may be an amusement on board of ship, but more are a great trouble, and though they may survive the voyage, the cold of an English winter plays sad havoc among them, only the hardiest kinds ever getting properly acclimatized.

Besides our birds we had a four-footed *protégé* in the shape of a large kangaroo hound, which had been our companion in so many troubles and difficulties, that we did not like to leave it behind. So "Keera," as we named it in remembrance of our Bush residence, was to accompany us home, and remind us when once more settled in the old country of our adventures in the far interior of Australia. Altogether we formed

a large party; unfortunately we were very late in engaging our cabins, and obtained but poor accommodation. Indeed, we were almost tempted to wait for the next steamer, and as circumstances turned out it would have been better had we done so, but our desire to be once more at home prevailed over our dread of a little discomfort; so we resolved to put up with the small cabins which alone we could secure, and with but few regrets prepared in good earnest to bid adieu to New South Wales.

CHAPTER XVII.

Confined quarters—Baby provender—A model captain—Homopathy and sea-sickness—Port of Melbourne—Its suburbs—The city—Fortunate purchasers—“What is in a name?”—The rival queens of the South—Melbourne streets—An argument for Bloomerism—Colonial goldornaments—The Yarra Yarra—A sound of *home*—The Botanical Gardens—Waterfowl—A natural preserve—Canvas Town—The Houses of Parliament—A senator in trouble—The land to make money in—The coast of Western Australia—Albany—A trip ashore.

THE steamer in which we were destined to perform our homeward voyage, was not perhaps the one on the line best fitted for tropical climates. Though a fine vessel, the accommodation for passengers was not particularly good, the cabins were small and not very well ventilated, and we were very unfortunate in having been so late in selecting ours. My husband got a small closet in the extreme stern of the vessel, while I, my servant girl, and the two children had to content ourselves with a cabin in the centre of

ALBANY.— KING GEORGE'S SOUND.



the ship some eight feet by six, or *thereby*. It required no little management to stow away our properties in so limited a space. One case which I had placed under my sofa to be always at hand, caused no little amusement among the ship's officers, it being marked "toasted bread." But I had suffered so much from having to live on ship's biscuit on my outward voyage, that I determined to provide a supply of something more digestible for my baby on our homeward journey. The baker who supplied me with my stores was quite a character, and had much to my amusement written our name and address in full, with many other interesting particulars on the cover of the deal case—"For you see, ma'am, if you're all lost, may be this case will be washed ashore, and it will be a mighty comfort to your friends," was his consolatory remark as he stowed the box away in the most convenient corner. The minds of all the good people of Sydney were just then very naturally running on shipwrecks, the sad loss of the Dunbar having quite recently occurred, which accounted for this melancholy prognostication.

I need not, I found afterwards, have encumbered myself with such a large package, for we were quite as well supplied on board with all the necessaries, and even luxuries of life as we could have been at home. Even milk, in general that most un procurable of luxuries at sea, I always obtained in abundance for my baby, and everything else that I could possibly desire, thanks in no small measure to the kindness and consideration of the captain, with whom my little boy became a great favourite.

Indeed, if anything could have reconciled me to a sea voyage, it would have been the unwearying and unceasing kindness and attention which I, in common with all the rest of the passengers, received from Captain Small, and that too in circumstances of no ordinary trial and danger. My anticipations of the voyage, however, were by no means so pleasant as my retrospections on the same subject are. I looked forward to six or eight weeks of utter misery ; I almost wonder now how I nerved myself to the undertaking, for I do not think any one ever suffered at sea more than I had done on our

outward voyage, and now, to add to my troubles, I had my tiresome little baby to look after, and such very, very poor accominodation. Experience had taught me the uselessness of all common remedies for the most terrible "*mal de mer*;" as a last resource, an acquaintance suggested homœopathy; I expected to derive very little benefit from it, as I did not consider I possessed the necessary faith, but I thought there would be no harm in giving the system a trial, and accordingly consulted a homœopathic doctor, and provided myself with a case of *select poisons*, which I took at proper intervals during the voyage between Sydney and Melbourne; and as, notwithstanding the very rough weather we experienced, I escaped *actual sea-sickness*, I really think I had some reason to believe in the efficacy of the system. I beg to state I am by no means a convert to homœopathy generally, I almost laugh at myself for thinking it possible such tiny sugar-plum doses could have any effect; but still I certainly *did* escape in great measure the honours of this most unsentimental complaint, when all the ladies and many of the gentlemen on

board were quite prostrated by it. For we had a very bad passage from Sydney to Melbourne, taking four days to reach the latter place, a distance often accomplished by the smaller coasting-steamer in forty-eight hours. We had left Sydney on the Friday, and it was ten o'clock on Tuesday morning before we cast anchor off Sandridge, the port of Melbourne. The harbour known as Hobson's Bay, is of far greater extent than that of Port Jackson; but not to be compared with it in point of picturesque beauty. On the shores of the bay have lately sprung up watering places of considerable extent, much frequented by the inhabitants of Melbourne; "St. Kilda" and "Brighton" may be mentioned as the principal of these marine suburbs; I only saw them from the deck of our steamer, but was told they were of considerable extent. We were to remain two days at Melbourne, and as I had never been there before, I was of course anxious to see all I could of this really wonderful place, "the metropolis of the South," as its citizens love to call it. The view of it from our anchorage was by no means prepossessing;

distance (it being still nine miles off) not lending its usual enchantment. The city lies very low, and the tract of country between it and Sandridge is flat, scrubby, and singularly unpicturesque; a railway has been formed across it, and in ten minutes from our seating ourselves in the train, we found ourselves in the heart of the busy city.

The stranger, who for the first time views the crowds which throng its broad thoroughfares, and listens to the busy hum which pervades them, can hardly realize the fact that little more than twenty years have elapsed since the first sod, so to speak, was turned of this golden city, which has since progressed with truly railway speed.

The woodcock shot in Regent Street in the days of Charles the Second, as recorded by Macaulay, is as nothing when compared with running down a kangaroo in Bourke Street, in the year 1836.

In the following year, it was, I believe, that Sir Richard Bourke, the then Governor of New South Wales, of which Port Phillip was then a province, came down to fix the

site of the future city, which was named after the premier of the day, a compliment which it is very doubtful if he then properly appreciated.

Land was of course at that time to be purchased at very low rates, and some of the early purchasers of the town allotments have since realized profits which would have seemed enormous, even to the original projectors of the famous Glen Mutchkin Railway.

In 1850, the inhabitants of Port Phillip obtained their long-cherished desire of separation from the colony of New South Wales, and, I suppose as a manifestation of loyal gratitude, solicited and obtained permission to change their name, whereby the province of Port Phillip became the colony of Victoria.

Since that time they have had their own Governor and Legislature, but as a salve to the pride of the inhabitants of New South Wales, its Governor is still styled Governor General, with nothing to govern beyond its limits.

There is at present no little jealousy between the two colonies, and from what I

could learn, New South Wales stands a fair chance of being left behind in the race of progress by her younger rival.

The *go-ahead* spirit and devotion to business, which strikes a new-comer in Sydney, is even more perceptible in Melbourne; indeed it is impossible even for a stranger not to remark the air of progress worn by everything about the latter place. But the jealousy and rivalry between the two cities is most apparent in the way that the one pooh-poohs any advantage that may be obtained by the other, or ridicules any *lion* that exists in the other's precincts; for instance, Sydney obtained a mint, of which she was very proud—Melbourne for a long time refused to allow the new coinage circulation; though it is a well-known fact, that Australian sovereigns are of a slightly higher value than British. Again, Melbourne instituted a *Punch*, which has proved to be really a clever production—Sydney tried something of the same kind, but failed, consequently Sydney votes *Punches* in general low. It is quite sufficient for one city to extol the merits of any actor or actress, to make sure

of their being cried down in the other, and *vice versa*.

But to return to the city itself. I may mention that Melbourne has been laid out with much more attention to regularity than Sydney. Its principal streets are very wide, and the shops and houses well built; the public buildings, too, are on a far finer scale, and the private dwelling-houses within the city seem more numerous. Altogether, its inhabitants seem determined that it shall eventually boast all the superiority that man's art can give it over the rival city; but nature has done far the most for Sydney in point of beauty, and I should think, for healthiness of situation, the metropolis of Victoria cannot for a moment compete with that of New South Wales. But there is one point, on which it would really be rather difficult to determine which city might claim the palm of precedence. It is really difficult to say whether the streets of Melbourne, or of Sydney might with the greatest propriety be cited as the most impassable, not to say unfordable thoroughfares in the whole world. The story goes,

that not so very long ago, the announcement in the papers of "another child drowned in the streets of Melbourne," produced no very extraordinary sensation among the public of Victoria.

Really the state of the streets in both these cities is very discreditable to the authorities of the place; why their condition should be so disgraceful, I cannot tell. The situation, both of Sydney and Melbourne, seems to offer every natural facility for proper drainage, especially that of Sydney, and yet the river of mud which flows down the side of each street, can hardly be imagined. In Melbourne, at the time of my visiting it, the gentlemen had pretty generally adopted the fashion of high waterproof boots, by the aid of which and by washing them at intervals in these *flowing rivers*, they walked about the streets in tolerable comfort; but as this fashion had not extended to the ladies, the condition presented by their long flowing dresses was pitiable in the extreme; I really think they will have eventually to adopt the Bloomer costume, which, if allowable under any circum-

stances, would certainly be so there, for the purpose of traversing these terrible quagmires.

The principal commission I had to execute in Melbourne, was that of procuring a few specimens of colonial workmanship in the native gold.

The ornaments at present exhibited for sale consist principally of brooches, breast pins, and studs, which are really often very prettily executed, sometimes in gold mixed with quartz in its native state; but more frequently the fine gold is filigreed, and is occasionally relieved by stones also found in the colony, garnets, and also a species of sapphire, with pretty crystals of different colours. Like everything else in Melbourne, these ornaments are rather expensive, their intrinsic value being but trifling, but they are really worth getting, as a proof of colonial advancement in the more elegant as well as the simply utilitarian arts and manufactures.

After having seen a little of the principal streets and shops of the city, we took a small boat and sailed up the river, the

"Yarra Yarra," or ever-flowing stream, as it is somewhat poetically named. Our destination was a friend's house, some four or five miles from Melbourne, named curiously enough after our own dear home. A tenant of my husband's grandfather had emigrated to Australia, purchased land on the banks of the Yarra, and named it after his native place far away in bonnie Perthshire; from him our friend had purchased the property, and had allowed it to retain its original appellation, which sounded so pleasantly in our ears. A twenty minutes' sail on the Yarra Yarra (which, notwithstanding its name, is a small and not very picturesque stream), brought us to the Botanical Gardens, where we landed, purposing to walk through them on our road to our friend's house. They are rather prettily situated, sloping down to the river, and certainly the most has been made of the situation; still they are not to be compared in point of scenery with those of Sydney. In size, however, I should think they equal, or perhaps surpass their rival, and contain, I believe, as valuable a collection of trees and

plants; though, from the gardens having been formed but very recently, the greater number of the shrubs have not at present attained anything like their full size or vigour. Of Australian indigenous plants in particular, I noticed a great variety, some of which were quite new to me, and which I examined with much interest. We had a beautiful day for our walk, and very much I enjoyed it, after four days' confinement in the close cabins of the steamer. Our little girl, who accompanied us, was as much pleased as we were, and ran about clapping her hands and almost screaming with delight. Her attention was particularly attracted by the large numbers of waterfowl collected in one part of the garden, where a sort of natural preserve exists in the shape of a small reedy lake or marsh, formed by an inlet of the waters of the river. Numerous curious specimens of wild fowl, both native and foreign are collected here, and they seem to afford as much amusement to the juveniles of Melbourne as I remember deriving in former days from the swans in the Regent's Park. By the middle of the day we reached our

friend's house, and after resting a short time we gladly availed ourselves of his offer to drive us again into Melbourne, that I might kill a few more of its *lions*. On our way into the city we passed the site of the "Canvas Town," of former days. The tents which formerly covered this spot have now however entirely disappeared, and this mushroom-like town now exists but in recollection. Our first destination was the Houses of Parliament, to which our friend, as a member of the Lower House, had at all times the *entrée*. These buildings were then in an uncompleted state, the halls of assembly being finished, but many of the necessary offices still in the course of erection. When the whole edifices are completed, they will present a very imposing appearance, and will well justify the pride taken in them by the inhabitants of Melbourne. The cost of the buildings must have been something enormous. I think I have heard more than a hundred thousand pounds has already been laid out on them. Their exterior is massive and imposing, and the dark gray stone of which they are built gives them a solemn, almost a

venerable appearance. The halls are fitted up with great elegance and good taste, that of the Upper House might be almost called gorgcous in its arrangements. The Houses were sitting at the time of our visit, so from the benches reserved for visitors I had the opportunity of listening to the speeches of some of the colonial celebrities.

All the forms and ceremonies in use in the British Parliament are adopted here with great rigour. Indeed, the members of the Colonial Legislature are not a little jealous of their senatorial privileges, a great regard being always shown to all the requirements of Parliamentary etiquette. The subject of discussion in the Upper House at the time of our visit, was the conduct of a member who had left the colony on his marriage-trip without giving due intimation of his intention to his brother legislators, and who was consequently declared to have been guilty of contempt of Parliament.

I was rather amused at listening to the proceedings, especially at the vehemence displayed by one old gentleman in a black velvet cap, who I afterwards found was a

well-known character in the Victoria Parliament. As it was getting late, however, we did not give much time to listening to the debates, but after driving about Melbourne a little, returned to our friend's house.

The next morning we again drove into the city, and afterwards through Collingwood, one of its most flourishing suburbs, and thence to the "Plenty Road," where my husband had some land which he was anxious that I should see. We had not time to go very far, as we were to be on board the steamer again by four o'clock, but we had the consolation of thinking we had certainly made the most of our time, and seen as much as it was possible to see in the course of twenty-four hours, of the Southern metropolis. My personal knowledge of it is of course very limited, but my husband, who at different periods had spent some three months there, was much pleased both with the city and its environs, and maintains that, despite its want of the natural advantages which Sydney can boast of, he would prefer Melbourne as a place of resi-

dence. The land in the interior of the colony boasts, I have heard, in fertility of soil, a great superiority over New South Wales, and was well named Australia Felix, by one of its first explorers, Sir Thomas Mitchell. The rich and extensive gold fields found within its limits have undoubtedly done much for the importance of the colony, and have, to use the words of a celebrated colonial statesman, "precipitated it into a nation." For young men I can imagine no better field of enterprise than the colony generally, and the busy bustling city of Melbourne in particular, but still it is rather the place to make a fortune in, than to enjoy it in when made. All the luxuries, and even many of the necessaries of life are still enormously expensive there, and the possessor of what would be at home considered a very handsome income, in Melbourne, can barely afford any indulgences. After all, there is no place like the old country to form one's home in, and I fancy most of us were of this opinion as from the deck of the "Emeu," we saw the shore of Victoria fade away in the distance.

We had not yet, however, bid a last adieu to Australia—a week more of tossing about on the rough waters of those stormy Southern seas, and we cast anchor in the fine harbour of King George's Sound, off the port of Albany in Western Australia.

The scenery of this part of the Australian coast is rocky and picturesque, but differs very essentially from any other part of the country that I have seen, in being wholly void of trees. The gray rocks are generally concealed by a kind of low brushwood, but as I stood on the deck of the vessel looking around on all sides, not a single tree could I discern.

The town of Albany is built close to the water's edge; it is very small, and boasts of but few tolerable houses, leading a stranger to suppose that the question of "how to settle and succeed" in that part of Australia would be answered with considerable difficulty. Notwithstanding the unprepossessing appearance of the country, *terra firma* has always attractions for sea-sick mariners, and we were only too glad to avail ourselves of the ship's boats to land for a few hours on

this barren-looking coast. On the shore some fifteen or twenty of the original inhabitants were assembled to do us honour, or rather to see what begging could extract from these invaders of their native soil; a miserable-looking set they were, appearing even lower and more degraded than the aborigines of New South Wales. Some of the women held in their hands bunches of wild flowers, which we eagerly purchased for a few halfpence; very lovely they were, and on looking round we discovered among the brushwood which had looked so unpromising, quantities of the prettiest flowering plants and shrubs. We were really perfectly enchanted with them, and determined to spend the few hours we were on shore in exploring the surrounding hills. We provided ourselves at the small inn with a loaf of bread, some cheese, and some beer—the only refreshments obtainable there—and giving them into the charge of one of the blacks who was to act as cicerone, we set off with two or three of our fellow-passengers for a good ramble. Every step we took, our admiration increased, for we were all enthusiastic lovers of flowers.

Mrs. L—— the only other lady of our party, and myself, contented ourselves with gathering large bouquets, but my husband less easily satisfied, pulled many up by their roots, with the intention of transferring them to our case of plants, while the doctor of the ship, who formed one of our party, put each new specimen in a little book, which, with more foresight than we had possessed, he had brought on shore for the purpose of preserving them in. The Australian wild flowers possess much the same sort of beauty as our own native blossoms; they are generally rather pretty and curious than gorgeously beautiful, but still they are very well worth collecting, and form a most interesting study for the botanist. King George's Sound abounds in more striking varieties than any other part of the colony that I have visited. I recognised one or two new species of the Epacris, and of the Banksia, but with a few exceptions the names of our treasures trove were quite unknown to me. After a delightful stroll of about a couple of miles, we arrived at the summit of a high hill, overlooking the town, from which we

obtained a most beautiful view of hill and water. The town looked really quite picturesque from this eminence, and the colouring of the landscape was very beautiful. In the distance sea and sky of the deepest azure relieved by the soft warm tints of the rocks, and the subdued green of the vegetation that covered them. Then, somewhat nearer, the white houses of the town prettily situated close to the water's edge, and in the immediate foreground, this underwood of flowers.

We stayed some four or five hours on shore, and returned to the ship to dinner, when we enjoyed some fresh fish which had just been caught in the harbour. Some were a species of mullet, and others whiting; none of them remarkable for any great delicacy of flavour, but still good enough to meet with great appreciation from us. Early next morning we were again under weigh, and had a fortnight's voyage before us, ere we could hope to catch sight of the fair shores of Ceylon, our next place of destination.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Our last look of Australia—A fishy fantasy—The order of the day on shipboard—Point de Galle—Another trip ashore—The Cinnamon Gardens—Re-embarking—Aden—A naval battle—The natives—Divers—The Red Sea—A midnight alarm—On the rocks—All hands at the pumps—An unpleasant alternative—Preparing to take to the boats—Ground sharks—Afloat again—Noxious gases—Nubian natives—Coral islands—“Passing on his way”—News from Jeddah—Off again—Zeal for the service—Suez—Last adieu—A comparison—Transit through Egypt—Malta—Home, sweet home!

“ But soon our glorious course was lost,
And treacherous was the deep ;
Ne'er thought we there was peril more
When tempest seemed asleep.”

M. Howitt.

AFTER leaving King George's Sound, we had a day or two more tossing about and feeling very miserable, till the 26th of the month, on which day we passed Cape Leeuwin, and fairly took leave of the Australian coast. A few days after we were in the tropics, and for some time made rapid pro-

gress, the good ship averaging 250 or 300 knots a day. If it had not been for the extreme heat I should really have enjoyed this part of our voyage; we had a few very pleasant fellow passengers, and a captain who was a favourite with everybody, and especially with the ladies, whose hearts he won by his extreme kindness to their children. The heat, however, was dreadfully oppressive. I suffered from it very much, feeling it more than others of our fellow-passengers from the bad situation of our cabin, which was close to the engine room. It was curious how much more we felt the heat at sea than on shore. I do not think the thermometer ever rose above 95° in the shade on our homeward voyage, while at Keera I had often seen it at 105° in the coolest part of our house, and yet it was far more oppressive on board of ship than we had ever found it on land. The nights in particular were very trying. I always slept with our port open, to get the benefit of the faintest breath of air. I must confess, however, to a nervous fear which always haunted me while lying beneath the open port-hole.

One of our fellow-passengers had told me that a flying fish had paid a visit to the steward's pantry through his little window, which was next to ours, and I was beset by the constant dread of being woke out of my sleep some night by a cold slimy creature falling suddenly on my face.

Board of ship life is at the best monotonous. Breakfast at half-past eight (a repast of which I always partook on deck), then a game of chess, a glance at some novel, with a fair amount of chit-chat and grumbling, passed the time till lunch, afterwards I generally indulged in a *siesta*, finding it hardly possible to sleep at night.

Dinner was at four. I was rarely well enough to bear the heated atmosphere of the saloon, and therefore generally dined on deck. About six o'clock we began to feel that we were really alive, conversed a little less languidly, perhaps took a turn on deck, or listened to one of our fellow-passengers who sang very nicely. So one day followed another with little variety. What I suffered from most, however, though it may seem laughable to say, was idleness, which I could

not conquer ; for though I saw other ladies busy at their work, or scanning the pages of some interesting volume, I could do nothing, all energy having left me—really a distressing complaint indeed, but one I am rarely troubled with on shore, having generally little appreciation of the *dolce far niente*. At last on the morning of Thursday the 8th of October, we anchored in the harbour of Point de Galle, a place too well known to need any description from my pen. To us it was our first glimpse of tropical scenery, and very lovely it appeared, the novelty of vegetation adding so greatly to its charms. Boat-loads of natives soon surrounded our ship, bringing fruit in large quantities, bananas, pineapples, water melons, and green oranges. One or two traders also came on board with specimens of native workmanship in tortoiseshell and ivory, another with a collection of precious stones, pearls, &c., but I do not think their enterprising spirit met with much reward. We were all bound for the shore, and preferred postponing our purchases for a little. Two of our fellow-passengers with their

nurse and child joined our party, and with some little difficulty we all embarked in one of the native boats. The sea was so rough, however, that I felt very nervous, and regretted having taken our children with us.

With some little difficulty we at last effected a landing, and walked on to the principal hotel, where we left our children and their nurses. Then I was no longer sorry we had brought them, the large cool rooms and verandahs formed such a delightful change from the closeness and confinement of the ship.

After indulging in some delicious pineapples and bananas, we ordered a carriage and drove down to the Cinnamon Gardens, the principal sight of the neighbourhood. I do not remember ever enjoying anything more than that drive, everything was so new to us. The recollection of it seems like a dream of the East. Our road lay close to the sea, through a grove of cocoa-nut palms—such luxuriance of vegetation I could hardly have imagined; and then the flowers, how lovely they were! so gorgeous in their hues, so graceful in their forms. I was

fairly enchanted. A drive of an hour or two brought us to the object of our visit, the Cinnamon Gardens, and we dismounted from our funny little vehicle, and proceeded to explore them. I do not know that these gardens themselves are very interesting, it is the drive to them that is so enjoyable.

The cinnamon plant is, I fancy, a kind of laurel; its appearance is very similar to that of the Portugal laurel, its leaves dark, glossy, and somewhat pointed in shape. The young shoots are of a delicate yellow colour, tinged with red, and are the prettiest part of the shrub. I made some inquiries about the operation of cinnamon peeling, which I was told usually takes place twice in the year. The first crop is the best and most abundant. This is obtained between April and August; the second between November and January. It is carried on much in the following manner: the first operation is to cut off the shoots of a year old, which vary from one to three feet in length, and are about the thickness of a finger, all the leaves are stripped off them, and an incision is made the whole length of the shoot. The bark

is then separated from the wood, the gray outer skin and the green inner rind are carefully scraped off, so that the bark remains quite free from all extraneous substance. It is then spread out in heaps to dry, and the power of the sun changes its colour from a greenish white to a deep brown, causing it also to roll closely round. It is then tied up in bundles or sheaves, and is ready for sale. While the operation of cinnamon peeling is actually carried on, the aromatic scent is, I have been told, perceptible for some distance round, but at other times the strongest imagination cannot detect the faintest aroma. The blossom has scarcely any scent, the fruit is very small, less even than a pea, and in shape like an acorn. By boiling this fruit or berry an oil is obtained, which, when cold, becomes a solid substance like wax, and is sometimes made into candles.

The gardens were bounded on one side by a stream, whose name I did not learn; on its opposite banks were rice plantations, paddy fields, I think they are called. Floating on the surface of the water were some

beautiful lotuses, of the brightest blue and rose colour. We got a bunch of them, but they faded so quickly before we reached our hotel, their beauty had quite gone. On our return to the town we drove about some of the streets, and made a few purchases at some of the shops. We returned on board of ship late in the afternoon. As we were walking down to the landing place we met a large party who had just disembarked from one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers, which was in the harbour laden with troops for India. At Point de Galle we heard the first particulars of the terrible Sepoy mutiny, and a very painful excitement it caused among us all, though I do not think there were many on board who had near relatives or friends exposed to peril.

We got on board of ship after much trouble, the sea running so very high, that we almost feared it would swamp our boat. Glad, therefore, was I to find myself once more on the deck of our good ship. The following morning we steamed out to sea again, our party having been augmented

by some thirteen or fourteen new fellow-passengers.

After a pleasant enough voyage of some eight days, we arrived at Aden on the afternoon of the 17th of October. We went on shore for two or three hours, but not having time to go to the cantonments we were obliged to content ourselves with a ramble along the coast, and a visit to the only shop near, which contained a pretty assortment of Bombay work, and carvings in wood, ivory, &c.

A more miserable place than Aden to live at can hardly be conceived—nothing but sand and rock, not a tree to be seen; but still there is something striking and picturesque in the appearance of its bold rocky cliffs, and the pinnacle-shaped hills which occupy so much of the inland horizon. We remained till it was quite dark, sitting on the beach, gazing upon sea and shore, and watching the bright phosphorescent waves as they rippled in at our feet. As the sun's last rays were lost behind the peaks, I made a slight sketch of this our first view of the Arabian coast. At length it was time to

think of returning to our ship, and we walked back to the landing place and got into a boat.

By some mistake it was not the one which had brought us ashore, and a squabble immediately arose between its owners and those of our former craft, who looked upon us as their natural prey. The chattering and shouting we did not much mind, but when the combatants began to use their oars as weapons of offence, I own I was somewhat frightened. Two other ladies were with us, and most willingly would we all have got out, but our boatmen (to prevent our escape) pushed into deep water, and were followed by their rivals.

A naval battle now commenced; my husband and Mr. L. rather enjoyed it than otherwise, I think, while we expected every moment that the boat would capsize, and give us an opportunity of enjoying a bath in the Arabian Sea. The conflict was summarily ended, however, by a native policeman, as he called himself, jumping into our boat, which had drifted near the jetty, and restoring order with his truncheon. The

principal offender threw himself overboard, and peace was established, so that at last we reached the ship in safety, though one of our boatmen all the way muttered threats of deadly vengeance on his opponent, much to Mrs. L.'s horror, and she endeavoured eloquently, though alas! I fear vainly, to convince him of his wickedness.

The natives of Aden are certainly a very low race, still, with my recollections of the Australian aborigines, they did not strike me as being so remarkably degraded and repulsive in their appearance as I had heard them described. One very curious habit they have, that of dyeing their hair a bright red, a custom which certainly does not tend to heighten any beauty they may have to boast of. They are generally almost amphibious, being, I suppose, the best divers in the world. The morning we started they came swimming round the ship, and dived for anything that was thrown to them; it was quite curious to see them.

Soon after leaving Aden we passed through the "Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb," and entered the Red Sea. The heat we here

suffered from far surpassed anything we had before endured, there was such a heaviness and oppression in the atmosphere. What it must be in the month of August I am at a loss to imagine. However, we consoled ourselves by thinking four days would soon pass, and at the rate we were going they would see us at Suez. On the second day after leaving Aden, we made up parties for the vans we were to cross the desert in, and drew lots for the turns in which we were to start. A merry happy party we all were, counting the days, almost the hours, that must still elapse before we would reach our home and friends.

That evening—I shall never forget it—was very fine and clear, though not moonlight, and we sat on deck till a late hour conversing cheerfully and listening to the endless stock of songs of our musical fellow-passenger. It must have been nearly eleven o'clock before we ladies left the deck and retired to our cabins. I had just fallen asleep, and was dreaming of shipwrecks and disasters, when I was awoke by the captain's voice crying "Stop her," and instantaneously

followed a violent shock, a grating sound, and all was still. To jump to my feet, strike a light, and call to my servant-girl were the work of a moment. "Ellen, we are on a rock, get up quickly, remember the *Dunbar*," were my waking words. Instantly my husband was at our cabin door, calling to us to wrap up ourselves and children, while he went on deck to see what was amiss. How quickly one thinks and acts at moments of danger. Cloaks and shawls I always kept at hand, and these were soon thrown on, and well do I remember selecting for myself and children our largest hats, to shelter us from the sun, seizing umbrellas for the same purpose, and last, but not least, securing a tin of rusks.

I even recollect, as I took out the tin, the baker's precaution of writing our name and address on the case, with the chance of its being found if we were shipwrecked, and wondered if it would ever be discovered. All this occurred in much less time than I have taken to describe it; fortunately my servant was even less nervous than I was, and assisted me quietly and readily. When

my husband returned and reported that there was no immediate danger, that the ship was evidently not in a sinking state, and that we might be quite composed, we dressed ourselves and the children. My poor wee baby! I remember his looking up in my face laughing and crowing at the unusual light and bustle. Leaving the children with my servant at the foot of the stairs, I went upon deck for a few minutes to see the state of things. They were just then letting off blue lights from the head of the ship, with the object of ascertaining our position. My husband went forward to the forecastle and learnt from the sailors what we had expected—that we were on a coral reef—and to render this beyond a doubt one of the sailors went down over the head of the ship and brought up some pieces of the coral. There seemed no present danger in our position, the sea was perfectly calm, and the ship's officers spoke confidently of our safety, so I went downstairs, laid my children in their berths, only taking off their hats, however, and recommended my servant-girl to lie down also. Sleep for me, how-

ever, was out of the question, so I went upon deck again, and trying to find a corner where I should be least in the way, I sat down and watched all the proceedings. The first thing done was to reverse the engines, and endeavour to steam off the rock, but with no avail; then every effort was made to lighten the forepart of the ship, the cannons were brought aft, then the heavy chain cable, and lastly a great portion of the stores, which were all laid upon the quarter-deck. This took some time to accomplish, some of the gentlemen passengers lending their aid to the crew, and all working hard. Early the next morning the report arose that the water was gaining on the ship, and all hands on board were in request for the pumps. There were two, one on each side of the vessel, the one was worked by the crew, and some of the gentlemen volunteered for the other. The "great pumps" were in connection with the engine, and unfortunately could only be used when the vessel was in motion. However, the smaller ones were made of as much use as possible, the gentlemen working hard, though not all

equally well. Those who were best able for it, the young men, with but few exceptions, generally rather shirked their turns, the middle-aged married ones doing a good deal more than their own share; yet I did hear something of an endeavour afterwards made on the part of some of the former to obtain salvage on the cargo—a proposition laughed at by most of those who had really worked well.

Pumping day and night, however, was certainly not a very pleasant occupation in that intensely hot weather; by way of refreshment, claret and soda water were drunk by the pumpers out of buckets, until, dreading fever, we Australian ladies suggested tea as a substitute, and from that time we had plenty of work in making and dispensing it, taking possession of the captain's cabin for this purpose. Poor Captain Small! how sorry we all were for the disaster on his account. Not that any portion of the blame could be justly laid on him; we had taken in a pilot at Aden, and the ship was of course in his charge. The very morning of the accident, I was told that the

captain (although neither he nor any of his officers had been in the Red Sea before) had given it as his opinion that proper allowance was not being made for some current, and that consequently we were too near the Nubian coast. The pilot had differed from him in his opinion, however, and I suppose had taken his own way.

The day and night after the accident passed, and another day dawned without any change in our position.

The water, despite the exertions made by all who worked to keep it down, was gaining fast upon us, and our situation was anything but pleasant. It is true we were within ten miles of the shore, but such a shore—a sandy Nubian desert; to think of landing there was altogether out of the question. The nearest port we could hope to make was Jeddah, on the Arabian coast, and the voyage there would have taken three or four days at least in our little boats. This last expedient would have been very terrible, the exposure to the sun would, I think, have almost killed our little children, but still it appeared our only alternative.

Accordingly the boats were lowered and provisioned, a paper was laid on the saloon table allotting to each boat its complement of passengers, and we were entreated, should it be necessary to embark in them, to observe the order there set down. We were to be allowed a small carpet bag between every two passengers, and it was not very easy to select what we wished to save, and induce it all to go into so small a compass.

I congratulated myself in having at hand some rather valuable jewels, which I sewed into a bag and wore round my waist as a pocket. I also deposited therein, as equally valuable at the time, some sulphate of zinc, the only specific against ophthalmia, which past experience had taught me to dread, and which I knew was very prevalent in these regions. In one bag I packed a change of linen for each, some valuable papers, and a digger's belt, containing rather a large amount in gold. These preparations ended, I proceeded to cover our largest umbrellas with white towels, to make them more impervious to the rays of the sun.

In the meantime a little boat had put off

from the shore, and came up to our ship. Its crew consisted of the natives of the place, half-Arab half-Nubian. They are a wandering race, and frequent this part of the coast for the purpose of fishing, their families living in tents on the beach, while they are engaged in this pursuit.

At this their first visit they seemed friendly enough, bringing us water of, which they imagined we might be in want. The captain retained them near our ship, as in case of our having to take to the boats he thought their skiff might contain some of the passengers, and their knowledge of the coast would be very valuable to us. It certainly was a comfort to have even such help at hand, for we had none of us much idea that our poor ship would weather out her troubles. Yet, strange to say, though we knew the danger, I do not think we were much alarmed—I can at all events answer for myself—after the first shock. It seemed quite natural to be there, and quite difficult to realize that with that calm sea there could be any cause for fear. The first evening I went upon the forecastle with

my friend Mrs. L., under the escort of one of the ship's officers, our husbands being hard at work at the pumps.

The cause of our misfortunes, the reef of coral, was rather a pretty sight to look down on. Curious shells and sea-weed were attached to it, and in the day-time fish of every hue were swimming in the shallow water, reminding one of the marvellous brightly coloured fish described in the "Arabian Nights." Far less pleasant to look at were the enormous sharks which swam in the deep water at the stern of the ship. I own I slightly shuddered when gazing on these monsters; they came quite in shoals, and remained constantly by us—by no means pleasant companions.

On the evening of the second day after our accident, the weather, which had hitherto been very calm and fine, caused us some little anxiety. The sky became dark and cloudy, and flashes of lightning in the horizon, with low peals of distant thunder, threatened a storm of some violence. This, in our situation, would really have been cause for fear; with the wind, the sea would

have got up and dashed our vessel, perhaps, to pieces against the rocks, while the boats would have run much risk of being swamped by the waves. But, most providentially, the storm passed over in another direction. I lay down for a little rest that evening, but at twelve o'clock was awakened by the captain, who himself came and knocked at our doors, telling us to dress immediately. The ship had drifted nearly off the rocks, and so large was the hole knocked in her two fore compartments that the fear was that she would go down immediately she got into deep water. Accordingly all night we ladies sat up in the saloon, our children sleeping on the sofas. Between five and six o'clock in the morning, my husband came down with the news that she was clear of the reef. He looked quite exhausted, and in reply to my questions said that some of the ship's stewards had relieved his party at the pumps, and that he was very glad of a little rest to recruit his strength, which he feared would be wanted. This his first desponding expression rather staggered me, and when in reply to some one's remark that

we should now get on to Suez, he said, "God grant that the ship may reach the nearest land," I certainly felt alarmed. Of course the captain knew better than to attempt reaching Suez in such a plight; he made for the nearest shoal harbour on the coast of Nubia, known as Dubberdab (I will not answer for the orthography), and we just managed to reach it. It was with no little difficulty that we got there, however. The vessel plunged onwards with her bows almost buried in the water, and the screw nearly out of it. We were afterwards told that had it tilted a foot more the screw would not have worked, and the ship must have become water-logged, even if the sound compartments had still kept her afloat.

However, we reached the harbour at last, and the vessel was run aground on a sandy beach, and for the present we were in comparative safety, though we had little thought that the poor "Emeu" would ever again be fit for sea. So hopeless did our situation seem in the eyes of the Admiralty Agent, that he immediately made arrangements for taking

on the mails to Jeddah in a native boat, intending also to send us succour as soon as possible; accordingly, the next morning he left us, accompanied by the master of the ship and two passengers. Our principal hope of rescue was, that some steamer might sight us, or might be met by one or other of the boats, despatched to be on the look-out; for, though in safety, our situation was most unpleasant. Added to the heat, which was very intense, we were suffering dreadfully from the terrible effluvia caused by the decomposition of the stores, which had been saturated with the sea water. Some idea may be formed of the noxious gases thus produced, when I state that in three or four days, all the white paint about the ship turned black, and the plate used at table became of the colour of copper. Several of the crew suffered from the effects of this bad air, my only wonder was, that some terrible fever did not break out; it could not have been as unhealthy as it was disagreeable, I suppose.

Two or three times, to escape this terrible annoyance for a time, we got permission to take one of the ship's boats, and the gentle-

men rowed us some little distance from the ship. Our first expedition was to the mainland, not a quarter of a mile distant. Here some twenty or thirty of the natives had formed a small encampment on the beach. Their huts or tents were of the rudest construction imaginable, consisting of two large bags, made of a coarse sort of matting attached together, and fastened to the ground by a large stick. Inside these bags the women and children crept for shelter, and sat doubled up at the mouth, so to speak, of the sack, gazing in wonder at us. The men sat round in a circle outside. They seemed quiet and friendly enough then, offering us sour milk, and a mixture of grain and salt, which we tasted as a pledge of good will. The land had a most desolate appearance; there was not a tree in sight, nothing but sand. In the background were high rocky mountains. Behind the first range of hills we were told a small village was situated, and I was rather anxious to visit it, but this was our first and last excursion to the mainland, for the next morning some of the natives came on board and addressed the captain in rather a threatening manner, de-

manding money as tribute. In reply, the captain showed them the large arm-chest, which he ordered to be kept on deck. This offer of lead and steel, in lieu of gold or silver, seemed to cool their courage; at all events they troubled us no more, but it was deemed prudent to keep a watch on deck from that time, and not to venture unarmed among them.

Our future excursions, consequently, were confined to the little islands around us, where we found a few shells, and pretty pieces of coral. No very rare specimens, however, were to be discovered. In the meantime a boat was constantly kept cruising about, in the hopes of its coming across one of the P. & O. steamers, and bringing it to our rescue. However, no friendly vessel came in sight, and we feared no help would come to us until the Admiralty Agent should report our condition at Suez—rather a forlorn hope, for as it turned out, he was some three or four weeks before making that port.

It will hardly be credited, that during this period, while stranded on the Nubian coast, we were seen by one of the Bombay steamers (who reported us at Suez), but

who never came to our aid, alleging that we made no signal of distress.

It was late at night when she passed us, and we did not see her, but were at that moment engaged in exchanging rockets with one of our own boats. Surely that circumstance and our situation told plainly enough our tale of need. I do not of course know anything of the rules of maritime etiquette, but it certainly seemed a want of common humanity to pass us by in that fashion.

The Admiralty Agent, as I have mentioned, left us with the mails for Jeddah the day after our reaching the harbour. On the afternoon of the sixth day from his departure the native boat that had taken him returned to the ship, having on board a Greek who brought letters from Captain G.

In them he held out little hopes of assistance. He had been four days reaching Jeddah (though the same boat returned in two), and no larger vessel was to be found there than the small craft he had gone in. In a similar one, he told us, he and his fellow-passengers purposed going on to Suez, despite the sufferings they endured in their passage to Jeddah from the heat, which was

very intense. We tried to elicit a little further information from the Greek, but he only spoke Italian, and mine had got a little rusty from long disuse, and the rest of the passengers were in the predicament of the stewardess, who when I asked her the news, said in a majestic tone of voice, "*Je ne puis pas speak Italiano.*" One of the stewards, fortunately, had been a great deal in the Mediterranean, and spoke the *patois* Italian in use in Egypt tolerably well; so through him we obtained all the information the Greek could give, which was little enough however.

The news he brought was by no means consolatory, but we were not much cast down by it, for it had been for a day or two rumoured on board, that there was after all some chance of our getting to Suez in our own ship. The crew had worked most indefatigably. The hold was to a great extent cleared of water, and the leak partially stopped by the means of bedding, old sails, trusses of hay, straw, and all sorts of unconsidered trifles of a heterogeneous character, which were all crammed together into the damaged compartments, and were afterwards

battened down; and in the calm waters of the Red Sea, the captain did not fear venturing to continue his journey, especially as when once in motion, the great pumps worked by the engine would keep the ship tolerably free of water. The difficulty was to get her clear of the sand. How this was effected I never understood, I suppose we had gradually drifted off; at all events, on the evening of the eighth day from beaching her in the shoal-harbour, the good ship was once more floating in deep water, and we were under weigh for Suez. The Greek from Jeddah was still on board, and would have it we were bound for that port to pick up the mails. This the captain would not venture on, however, thinking probably that it would be as much as we could do to reach Suez in safety, and that in making this latter port, we should be in sight of land the whole way, whereas in going to Jeddah, we should have to cross the Red Sea, a distance of one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles, which would have been running a great risk, in case of the leak again getting the better of us.

This I explained as well as I could to the

Greek, urging him to return in one of the native boats, but either my Italian or powers of rhetoric were at fault, for I could not prevail on him to do so, and his despair when he found we were actually taking him to Suez was great. However, next morning we sighted the P. & O. steamer "Hindoostan" and prevailed on her to go in search of our mails, and our friend the Greek took his departure by her. I afterwards heard that when the "Hindoostan" reached Jeddah, it was found that the Admiralty Agent, having either become tired of waiting, or moved by zeal for the service, or perhaps from both reasons, had embarked himself, his mails, and his fellow-passengers in another native boat, for Suez, and at length after a cruise of eighteen days, the pleasures of which may be imagined, was picked up by a P. & O. steamer, presenting then a pitiable, as well as practical proof of the truth of an old saying, that people always get into trouble "who exaggerate their duty." We reached Suez with no further adventure than that of sighting a stranded vessel, a small schooner; despite our disabled

condition *our* captain went some miles out of his route to offer assistance to her, but we found she had been abandoned by her crew, so we continued our course. It was night when we landed at Suez, and bid adieu to the poor crippled "Emeu." Truly thankful we were to reach our port after such a narrow escape from shipwreck, and yet I think there were few of us who had not some little regret in leaving her for her captain's sake, we had all become attached to her ; his kindness and attention I shall never forget, it was unceasing to the last moment. The last glimpse I caught of him was standing at the door of our van just as we were starting for our desert journey, his hands full of oranges, which he had taken some trouble to procure for my children. It was a marvel to me, how, in the midst of his arduous duties, even in the time of our troubles, he never omitted his thoughtful attentions for the comfort of all on board ; he always had a kind word for every one. If it should ever be my fate to take that long voyage again, I would not hesitate to renounce the better accommodation of the

"Australasian," for the small cabins of the "Emeu;" I would even wait a month or two in Australia to secure going by her, and the force of language can no further go.

The transit through Egypt was quickly performed, and has been so often described, I need not dwell upon it. For the first five-and-twenty miles we were all packed in the old fashioned vans which took us to the Desert Railway Station, an assemblage of tents where we got some refreshment, and waited the arrival of the train which was to take us on to Cairo.

I cannot forbear mentioning the bad management attending this part of the journey. We had left Suez at four in the morning, and arrived at the station soon after nine. Here we were detained in the tents under a burning sun till six in the evening, no other refreshment being provided for us excepting the breakfast ready for us on arriving. From that time till ten at night, when we reached Cairo, we had nothing to eat; it was with difficulty that I managed to obtain even a little goat's milk, and some biscuit for my children. The heat all this time,

and the plague of flies which we had to endure, can only be imagined by other travellers in Egypt. I have a very faint recollection of the railway journey to Cairo, I was suffering all the time from an attack of tic-douloureux, which was not favourable to observation ; still, I remember being struck by the wondrous beauty of Cairo, its domes and minarets, and the graceful forms of the palm-trees, appearing to great advantage in the soft moonlight.

After seeing my children in bed, late as it was, my husband and I strolled out for a short time along the deserted streets, but were afraid to venture very far. The next morning, by six o'clock, we were in the train bound for Alexandria; we arrived there at about four in the afternoon, and by six were on board the "Australasian," which had been long waiting for us, so my recollections of Egypt are very slight. A desert of burning sand, a city of fairy-like beauty, fields of the intensest deepest green, one glimpse at the mighty Nile—these are all my recollections of the land of the Pharaohs, the once all-powerful Egypt, now how fallen and degraded !

Of our wanderings I have nothing more to tell. One day we spent at Malta, and the next shore we trod was that of our own dear England. How truly rejoiced we were once more to see the land of our home and friends none can tell but those who, like ourselves, have been for a while sojourners in a land of strangers, far away from many very dear to them. The latter part of our voyage, too, had been very unpleasant; my husband and children had all been suffering from severe illness—the effects, no doubt, of the malaria to which we had been so long exposed.

A weary anxious time I had of it, and very happy I was to be once more at my own home, with kind friends to assist me in nursing my invalids; and not unmindful were we, I trust, of Him whose works are in the deep, and Who had brought us safely through much peril to the haven where we would be.

THE END.

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